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Window on Jordan

I am depressed so I must be crazy!

Star Staff Writer
EVERYONE KEEPS asking him, "What's wrong with you?" His answer is always the same: "Nothing is wrong, I am fine." But maybe he hadn't realized that he began to loose his temper about silly things, and even isolating himself, refusing invitations from his friends to meet and spend time together.

The nagging question continues to bother him, eventually pushing him to figure out that he needs help. As an educated person he wants to visit a specialist, but the "stigma" he could face makes him completely forget that option. He already hears people talking at the back of his head saying are you

mad to go to psychiatrist, what would people think? But there is an alternative: to see that "good man" who lives just up the road. His wife urges him on because of the nagging she receives from her friends. Believing that it would do no good, nevertheless he makes an appointment to see that "good man" who really dabbles in hocus pocus.

At the moderately furnished house, but in a confident tone, the old man tells him that a mysterious power controls his life—that is why he suffers from obscure symptoms that dominate him completely, so he needs to spend more money.

Months after that, our hero discovers that he is the

victim of blackmail: He becomes broke and his health deteriorates. At last, he goes to a physician who recommends him to a specialist.

A number of sessions and he is back to normal, all his suffering was traced back to the beginnings of a depression caused by the routine of his daily life.

"All you need is to take a vacation for a couple of days," were the last words he heard from the psychiatrist, who was very friendly and different from the image he previously had of them.

This case is not the first and will not be the last

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Washington peace talks may breath new life into peace process

By Ghassan Joha and agency dispatches

THE VISIT to Jordan, Monday, by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was an important step for the on-going consultations between Jordanian and Palestinian officials.

The visit, which came ahead of a peace summit that is due to start, today, Thursday, 15 October, was followed on Wednesday with a similar visit by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

HRH Prince Hassan, the Regent, held talks with the two leaders during their visit. Jordan has reiterated its support to the Palestinians and urged Israel to comply with the US proposals. Prince Hassan and Mr Arafat were optimistic that the next stage of the talks will pave the way for the final status



Prince Hassan with Benjamin Netanyahu

negotiations.

Prince Hassan later said that Mr Netanyahu's surprise visit to Amman puts Jordanians in a realistic atmosphere and full of hopeful optimism.

Both Arafat and Netanyahu will take part alongside with the US President Bill Clinton in the peace talks, due to be held at the Wye Plantation near Washington.

While President Arafat said he hoped that an agreement will be reached, Mr Netanyahu stressed on the usual Israeli demands that peace can't be reached without security.

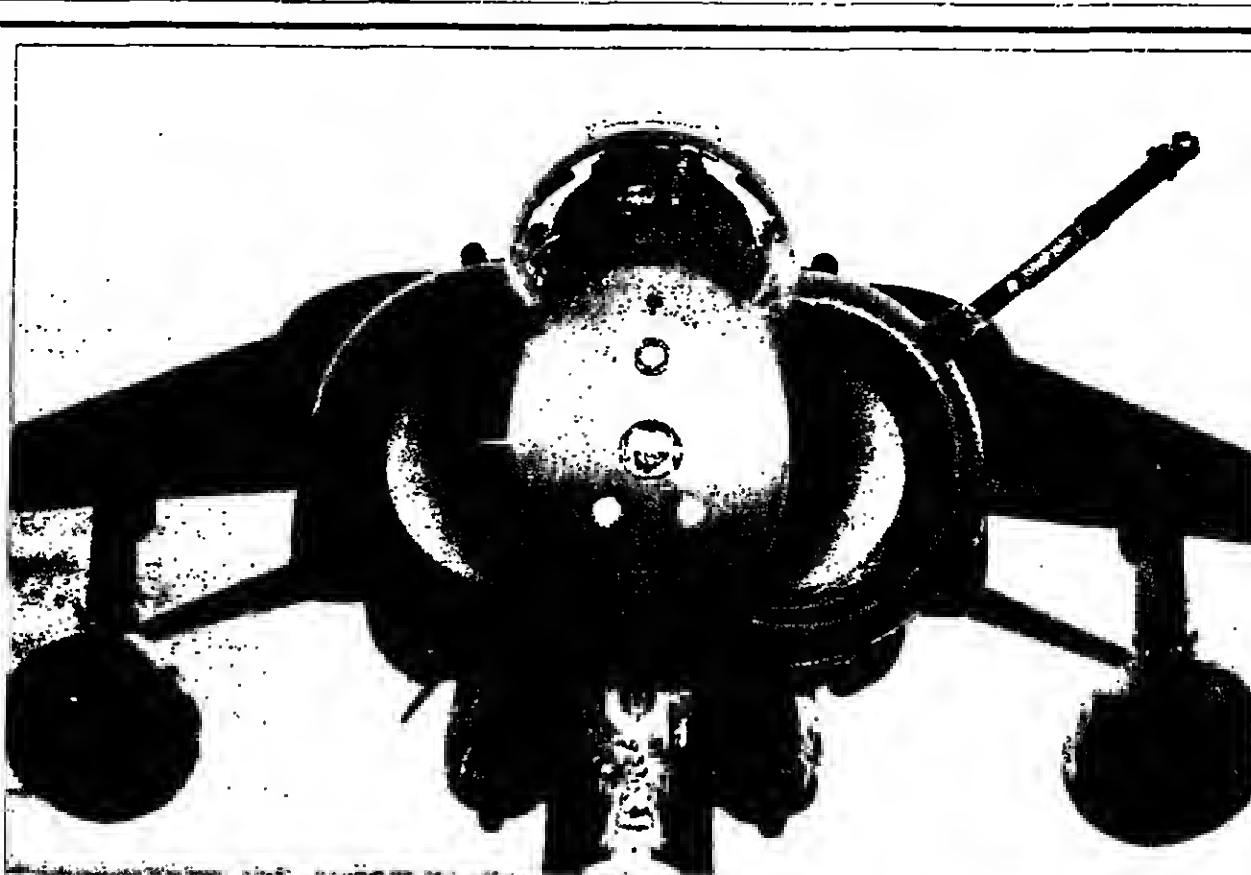
The past week, however, was marked with severe clashes between the Palestinians and Israeli forces in Hebron, the ravaged fires in north Israel, and return of Ariel Sharon to politics.

The fires have destroyed hundreds of hectares of forest since first broke out early on Sunday in north and central Israel. No deaths were reported.

It was not only the woods that were burned, but also the nerves of both Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

Two days before the summit, Mr Netanyahu set a strikingly pessimistic tone after gunmen militants opened fire on a pair of young Israelis near Jerusalem, killing one, and wounding the other seriously, just hours after the Israeli army has eased restric-

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A Royal Air Force GR7 Harrier taxis before taking off on a sortie from Gioia del Colle in Southern Italy. The Harriers are part of a combined NATO force gathering to react to the current crisis in Kosovo in the wake of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, just as news of an apparent resolution of the crisis comes in. After weeks of tension and threats of airstrikes, President Milosevic finally agreed to withdraw his forces from the province. The agreement came on Tuesday, 13 October, following the US special envoy Richard Holbrooke's intervention.

Reuters

National dialogue, a sole option at this critical stage

By Itham Sadeq

Star Staff Writer
THE ONGOING dialogue between the government and civic society institutions is gaining momentum, amidst an encouraging atmosphere that is involving all parties. Any move to enhance the cooperation and coordination among all sectors of the community is a step in the right direction.

Whilst the Government is keen to increase the level of cooperation by outside institutions, there are still some political parties who are reluctant to accept the challenge.

The man in the street, meanwhile, is generally all for such an initiative, seeing it as a positive step—one that the former government should have employed—which shows the current government's desire for greater dialogue. Caution is still needed, however, because despite the Government's good intentions, there has been more words than action.

The debate for a national dialogue was launched by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and he has ensured that action is indeed taken. The Prince has met with Muslim Brotherhood leaders and representatives of the Professional Associations, in an effort to combine efforts for the well being of the country and to help bridge the gap in confidence that has opened up between the people and the Government.

The move is also in line with the designation letter issued by His Majesty King Hussein to Dr Faysal Tarawneh's Government in late August. The Kingdom is passing through a critical stage at the moment—especially on the economic level, with the rising levels of unemployment and poverty—so it is vital that the speeches and statements are converted into action.

In a news conference held recently, Prime Minister Dr Faysal Tarawneh told the audience that, "The dialogue currently being launched by the Government is not an ideological luxury... It is a serious move aimed at reform, and to assist in targeting new ideas that will hopefully lead the country and the citizens towards prosperity."

He also called on all political and parliamentary parties, economic activists and labor fed-

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Tiff among Islamists is a storm in teacup

By Ibtisam Awadat

Star Staff Writer
THE ISLAMIC Movement dominated the headlines this week after the controversial declaration by Dr Ishaq Al Farhan, the former secretary general of the Islamic Action Front (IAF). He shocked many when he said that the IAF should be dissolved.

"The party should be dissolved and limit its work to the Muslim Brotherhood," Al Farhan was quoted as saying. If the party didn't want to do that, he said, then the party would need to "detail a plan to activate the IAF, by making it a more adhesive and flexible force to participate in political life." These views were excerpts from a speech

delivered by Dr Farhan at the opening session of the Shura Council, last week.

The motives for his views is to do with the fact that political parties in the country are in a bad shape. He said that they have suffered from the governmental restraints, which has prevented parties from merging. Yet, this is not the whole story. He also added that parties are in need of financial support from the state, to put an end to the accusations that they are receiving finances from external sources.

However, not everybody agrees that the problem is restricted to finance. Dr Abdel Latif Arabiyat, IAF general secretary, said that

the reasons for "the crisis in the party" date back to when it boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections.

"We lost quite a few of our active members then, as they chose to participate in the elections rather than adhere to the party line," Dr Arabiyat said.

"Our stance was justified at the time, as it reflected our rejection of a number of government policies such as the 'one man, one vote' be added.

Today, Arabiyat believes that the IAF has recovered from the effects of the boycott, and is now back in an even stronger position.

Discussions concerning the role of the IAF took place during the meeting of the Shura Council, which was devoted to the internal procedures of the party. However, the Council failed to pass a recommendation from the executive bureau of the IAF, to decrease the number of the members in the Shura Council from 120 to just 80. A war of words followed the meeting.

The IAF was formed following the implementation of the Political Parties' Law in 1992. The objective behind its formation was to bring the different Islamic trends together, especially the Muslim Brotherhood and the Independents, to form one political arm.

Some observers say that the latest outcry by Dr Farhan is justified since the IAF is affiliated to the Brotherhood in all its decisions. The 1997 boycott was a prime example of this, as it gave the impression that the IAF was not independent anymore.

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Singer's snub leaves UN officials singing blues

By Craig Turner

UNITED NATIONS—Elton John's last-minute decision to drop out of his newest gig as a "messenger of peace" left UN officials feeling perplexed and a bit snubbed Tuesday, the LA Times-Washington Post News Service reported.

Folks here are used to snubbing warring factions in hopes of arranging a cease-fire or engineering an emergency food drop in a faraway land, but dealing with the shifting whims of one of pop-dom's biggest stars is new territory.

For months, UN officials have been talking to representatives of the British singer-songwriter about joining the roster of celebrities whom Secretary-General Kofi Annan has recruited in an effort to bring greater public attention to the good works of the United Nations.

John was to have been honored for his work raising awareness—and millions of dollars—in the fight against the worldwide

AIDS epidemic. The feeling was that John's activities would reinforce the work of a Geneva-based UN agency that has been a leader in chronicling the spread of the disease.

The performer was supposed to have received his symbolic lapel pin depicting a dove of peace from Annan on Tuesday and then meet with reporters at UN headquarters. Late Monday afternoon, however, John's manager, Colin Bell, delivered an apologetic letter to Annan's office saying that the recently knighted star had determined he couldn't do the job justice right now and asked for an indefinite postponement.

"After much deliberation," Bell wrote, "Mr John does not feel he has sufficient time to honor this commitment in the proper manner and give it the support that

it deserves."

UN officials scrambled to rescind their press announcement of the award and cancel the news conference. At least one high-level operative was left muttering about "prima donna" behavior.

A spokeswoman for John was decidedly defensive Tuesday in explaining the decision, saying that the accumulated pressures of recording and touring, raising \$3 million a year for his own AIDS foundation and other charitable work caused the late change of heart.

"He had to listen to what his heart was telling him," she said. "He didn't want to take on a title and do nothing."

She added that John still is interested in becoming a peace messenger at some time in the unspecified future. "Yeah, sure," was the skeptical response of the UN

World
REPORT

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Photos by Khalil Mazra'a



Prince around town

AMMAN (Star)—Ammanites spent several hours with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent and those who accompanied him headed like Prime Minister Dr Fayez Tarawneh on a tour of some districts in Amman, Sunday.

The Prince who went to Al Nuzha, Al Hussein Camp, the downtown area, Quelsme and Wihdat was shown around some of the projects that are currently being carried out by the Greater Amman Municipality.

Prince Hassan also inspected the Al Urdun road project which costs JD 10 million to link the southern parts of the capital with the northern parts of the Kingdom.



For the Record

Intellectual property
AMMAN (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Monday received Dr Kamal Idris, general director of the International Organization of Intellectual Property Right. The meeting focussed on discussing the Jordanian proposal to establish a regional office in Jordan for the organization, the matter which is to be discussed during the coming meeting of the Arab ministers of culture. Discussions focussed, also, on means of enhancing cooperation between the organization and the Jordanian National Library, and the Industrial Property Unit of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Jordan observes World Food Day

Amman, (Petra)—Jordan joins the world to mark the World Food Day on 16 October, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) under the title "Women Feed the World." Agriculture Ministry Secretary General Hashem Shbool, who heads the national committee of the celebrations said the ministry has prepared a special programme to mark this occasion. The programme aims to highlight the woman's effective role in food production through her participation in various agricultural activities. Shbool said, The program will shed light on the importance of projects carried out in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP) food-related agricultural policies in Jordan, he added.

Chinese official visits Petra
AMMAN (Petra)—General Director of Jordan News Agency, Petra, Abdullah Brown, on Monday received Chu Bang Zhao Director of Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry's Information Department. The discussions focussed on reviewing fields of cooperation between the two friendly countries, particularly, in the field of information.

UNRWA

Amman, (Petra)—A workshop on the best use of laboratory services opened Monday at the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Amman with the participation of senior staff specialized in lab services in UNRWA's five fields of operation: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Director of the UNRWA health programme in Amman Nashed Atmari said the four-day workshop aims to upgrade laboratory services at the agency's health centers and eventually improve health services for Palestinian refugees.

Middle East Patriarchs
AMMAN (Petra)—The 8th Conference of the Orient Catholic Patriarchs opened Sunday. It was called forth by Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem. He said the conference is being held as we are approaching the second millennium, an event which has special meaning in our history and the history of all mankind. "With the absence of peace in this region and in the holy land in particular, we express our hope that peace will prevail in this region, the just peace that preserves our history and stability in our region," Patriarch Sabbah said. He said participants in the conference are discussing among other topics preparations for the coming challenges in May 1999, the challenges we are facing at this difficult time and the issue of the holy city of Jerusalem, which has a unique status for all mankind. Patriarch Sabbah explained the sanctity of the holy city for the three monotheistic religions which makes the city raise above all conflicts and feuds. He urged followers of the three monotheistic religions to cooperate with the international community in general and the Arab countries in particular to determine this special status of the city and preserve it.

Inter-faith

AMMAN (Star)—Prince Hassan, on Sunday received patriarchs participating in the conference of the Middle East Patriarchs currently being held in Amman. During the meeting, Prince Hassan called for continuing dialogues and meetings with a view to deepen the region's comprehensive cultural heritage. The Regent stressed the need to highlight the tremendous contributions provided to others by the Arab region and its civilization, which is characterized by tolerance, moderation and diversity. Referring to current UN deliberations marking the 50th anniversary of the International Human Rights Declaration, the Regent said this should serve as an opportunity to talk about human rights from a perspective that should not be confined to civil rights and drawing on particular culture, but from the perspective that should include political, religious, and social rights stemming out of the origin civilization.

I am depressed so I must be crazy!

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since the old traditional mentality that has spread in our society came to consider psychological stress as a sign of insanity which no one can cure but traditional old men, who have some kind of mystical powers. In reality that is just fraud.

The psychiatrist is a very important person. At some stage in our lives almost everyone pays him a visit. Feelings of depression, isolation and solitude are healthy and normal symptoms if they are effectively handled. And in that respect, if we judge this personality or that one as a crazy one, then all the people would be considered lunatics.

But part of the psychiatrist stereotype has been depicted and perpetuated by the media, that "he is a person who was

obliged to study medicine upon his father's wish, but because he arrived late at registration at university, he had to study the only field that was left to him: psychiatry. Through the numerous series and films, the psychiatrist tries to comically reflect his failure on his—most of the time—healthy patients.

But we need to be fair to these doctors and not to underestimate their profession, the first should be for the media to take greater responsibility. "Craziness doesn't exist in the psychiatrist's dictionary, since it's a legal term and not a medical one," said one of these psychiatrists.

To avoid reaching the edge, force yourself to choose the right path from the beginning, give the psychiatrist a visit, and don't give a damn about people's gossip.

Regent stresses need for quite diplomacy

AMMAN (Petra)—Information Minister Naser Judeh on Saturday said that the phone call carried out Saturday between His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Egyptian President Mubarak focussed on exchanging views mainly on the crisis between Syria and Turkey.

Judeh told reporters following the regular session of the cabinet that both sides agreed on the necessity to restore to quiet dialogue and to refrain from using force, encouraging them to achieve a peaceful solution for this crisis.

The Regent expressed appreciation to the Egyptian endeavours and President Mubarak's mediation between Damascus and Ankara.

Jordan, directly, follows up the peace process, particularly,

between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the minister said.

The statements of Palestinian, Israeli and American officials have been clear and have shown the existence of progress in the negotiations through agreement on many points, the minister added.

Judeh expressed Jordan's optimism regarding the summit which is to be held in USA between President Clinton, President Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Responding to a question regarding the government's stand concerning the nomination of Ariel Sharon as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Judeh said that this is an internal Israeli affair. "We, in Jordan, deal with the Israeli government as a government not with individuals," Judeh concluded.

British businessmen express confidence in Jordan

Amman, (Petra)—British businessmen on a visit to Jordan expressed confidence in the Jordanian economy and said in interviews with Petra that the Kingdom has become an economic attraction zone for businessmen.

The delegation consisting of 12 British companies of Business Link, Milton Keynes and North Bucks is on a tour in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to enhance British-Arab economic cooperation within the context of Euro-Arab partnership agreements.

British businessmen pointed out that the achievements of Jordan entitle it for further economic prosperity. Jordan enjoys political stability and security while economic indications raise optimism as Jordan's cash reserves total more than \$1.4 billion, the dinar exchange rate is stable and inflation rate is low, they said.

This visit, the businessmen said, is an indication of Britain's confidence in the region's political and economic future and its peoples' ability to surpass all tensions.

Five British business delegations, visited Jordan, in 1998, two more delegations are due to visit the Kingdom later this year.

"Anglo-Jordanian" relations are historic, their strength stems from the directives of His Majesty King Hussein, the follow-up of Crown Prince Hassan and the British government's keenness on boosting and continuing the special relations between the two countries, the economic and commercial advisor at the British Embassy in Amman, Berny Wilson said.

Twelve British companies have investments in Jordan, the most recent of them is "Rolls Royce." These investments help

employ Jordanian labour and give the international business community more confidence to invest in Jordan, Mr Wilson added.

On the other hand, Head of the British delegation David Brooks said Jordan does not suffer of a real economic problem. Its economic conditions are better than those of many countries and "I am optimistic of Jordan's economic future," he stressed.

Members of the delegation welcomed Jordan's approach to make Aqaba a free trade zone and said they will review the possibility of investing in the Qualified Industrial Zone. "We hope British companies will make investments in the Qualified Zone," said Mr. John Blackwood, the export promotion officer at the British Embassy in Amman.

Investment and industry.

National dialogue, a sole option in this critical stage

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ations to take part in the dialogue, to ensure that the widest range of interests are taken into account.

Dr Tarawneh expressed the government's willingness to discuss all issues of concern to the civic society institutions, but he stressed that the final word would have to be left with the law. A committee has been

already formed to discuss the mechanisms for the dialogue, comprising seven members from the cabinet and headed by the Prime Minister. A date for Sunday has been fixed for a meeting between the government and the Council of Professional Associations. "The meeting is scheduled to deal with all the problems and concerns of the Professional Associations," Dr Tarawneh said.

However, the President of the Council, Mr Hassan Jaber, told The Star that it will only discuss issues of common interest.

"The meeting will deal with various issues concerning the public, such as the Syrian-Turkish conflict, the sales tax on engineering offices, and public freedoms in general," he continued. Mr Jaber added that the scheduled meeting would have a

special agenda, whereby every association will have the chance to meet separately with the government, and to express their individual concerns.

He reiterated that, "The Association has no complaints about the principle of a national dialogue, but it must guarantee constructive and fruitful solutions to all our problems."

Dispute between professional associations and political parties

Continued from page 1

political parties) overlap each other to a great extent. Many association members are acting members in the political parties as well, which often causes a conflict in interests. However, analysts in all the daily newspapers have said that the decision is based on the associations' fear of being dominated by the political parties, when dealing with the major internal and external issues facing the Kingdom.

An example of this can be seen by the call by political parties for a National Conference for Salvation and Reform, to address the reasons behind the recent boycotting of elections. The Professional Associations response was less enthusiastic, as they demanded more time to study the agenda.

"Our position was clear, and we respected the Associations' wishes by not publishing any document regarding the conference," Thyab continued, "and if we really wanted to monopolize the political scene—as some people have accused us of—we would have acted on our own and not waited for anyone."

A request by the political parties to hold a solidarity demonstration at the Professional Association Complex, in support of Syria (embroiled in a dispute with Turkey) has consequently been rejected.

"The Professional Associations will be holding a demonstration, so our decision is not as bad as it has been made out to be, because invitations will go out to all our members, many of whom are affiliated to a political party," said Hassan Jaber, president of the Professional Associations Council.

"All the activities at the complex are limited to members of the Professional Associations, and all activity on behalf of political parties will be banned," Jaber confirmed to The Star. "Our decision on the demonstration is being backed by the Ministry of Interior, which will refuse any application from the political parties. Anyhow, all

the halls at the complex are currently being used by the Palestine Week activities," Jaber added. Jaber denied that the dominance of the political parties was behind the decision, emphasizing only that the decision was unanimously taken.

Tiff among Islamists is a storm in cup

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However, limiting the role of the IAF will curb the expenses that are borne by the Muslim Brotherhood, although finance is only part of the story. Members of the IAF said that what was published in newspapers earlier this week was simply wrong. "During the Shura Council meeting, Dr Farhan urged the party to assume its tasks effectively, and to activate its role in political life," said IAF executive Bureau member Hamzeh Mansour. "How could the person who built the party, call for its dissolution," Mansour told The Star.

"IAF has around 4,000 members at the moment, and we hoped that thousands of others would join the party, but government practices aimed against us have seriously limited our membership," Hamzeh said, who joined a list of harassment by the government. "We still work as if we are not legally authorized party," he added, "which makes our life very hard."

Another problem hindering the party was that experienced and harder working employees have not been promoted because of their membership in the IAF. Security forces have also reportedly harassed party members, and investors, because they are from the Muslim Brotherhood or support the IAF.

"There is no crisis in the IAF, and it is the government

that is our only obstacle," Mansour added, an opinion shared by many members of the Muslim movement.

"What happened is far from the truth. We don't have a crisis," said Hamid Abu Baker, spokesman of the Brotherhood. "The meeting which aired out different points of views was like any other," Abu Baker told The Star.

"The speech of Dr Farhan was published in a misleading way, to give an impression that the IAF is dominated by the Brotherhood," Baker added, "but it is only natural to have the identical viewpoints, since the majority of the IAF are acting members of the Muslim Brotherhood."

Washington peace talks may breath new life in peace process

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tions on Palestinians, in which thousands of workers were allowed to enter the Jewish state. The move came after two weeks of stiff closure of the territories, due to a Jewish feast.

Netanyahu said that no deal would be signed on the expected military redeployment in the West Bank, following the fatal shooting. The slain, who was the second to be killed in five days, throws murky prospects for success at the summit, and underscores the key issue of Netanyahu's demand that the Palestinians must do more to prevent, what he called, terror attacks against Israelis.

A female soldier was stabbed to death on 9 October by a Palestinian man. Security forces from the two sides, said that the assailant was mentally ill and acted alone.

The Israeli army started to adopt closures to prevent Islamic groups from carrying out major bombing strikes inside Israel, in revenge to the killings made by Israeli forces of wanted Palestinians. On their side, Palestinians

often blamed the Israelis for such actions, saying the closures amount to be a collective punishment, which causes widespread hardship to their areas.

Although the number of Israelis killed in terrorist attacks in the past two years is the lowest in a decade, the latest shooting was much feared to damage hopes that the US brokered talks could break the 19-month deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talk.

Netanyahu has come under increasing pressure from right-wing members of his government as well as from Sharon, who was appointed as a new Foreign Minister last week. The Israeli cabinet formulated a list of nine demands that Palestinians must meet before a withdrawal can take place.

They include an end to public incitement, cooperation on security, dismantling militants and decreasing the size of the Palestinian police force. Israel also urged Palestinians to arrest and extradite suspects in attacks against their people and so fight

terror. The key Israeli issue to be tackled in the upcoming talks is an agreement on what constitutes a good faith by the Palestinians to crackdown on Islamic militants.

Netanyahu has agreed in principle to hand over 13 per cent of the West Bank, with some restrictions, saying that he would stick to security demands during the Washington talks.

President Clinton has asked both Netanyahu and Arafat, by telephone on Monday, to conclude the agreement on the troop withdrawal as soon as possible.

Political analysts say that such accord will be reached at the end due to a deal that had been completed by the CIA director George Tenet on security, and favored by both sides. Tenet has held meetings with Mr Arafat and Netanyahu.

Same analysts, however, say that it is hard to predict the outcome of the summit, adding that only the Palestinians can guide the talks to their interests since there is nothing to lose. "Had the Inti-

fade not happened, Palestinians would have not been able to resist the Israeli and hold on to their dream for an independent state," says one of the analysts.

Although peace talks were often postponed due to Israeli intransigence, hopes are rising among Palestinians that the Israeli cabinet will finally reach a deal since this is its only hope of remaining in power, many observers believe.

Classified

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هنا من النهر

JORDAN

WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

More national service

One of the latest ideas for combating unemployment in Jordan is to bring back national service. The Minister of Administrative Development, Dr Bassam Al Omoush, denies that the government wants to make military service compulsory, but says this is just one of the many options currently being looked into. The minister said that even if national service were to be brought back, there would be major changes. Firstly, the salary would be much more attractive. At the moment, military conscripts are paid a monthly salary of JD 18. Secondly, national service would also be available for those more suited to that environment. Although national service would be compulsory, it would be hoped that the youth of this country would participate fully, and thereby reduce the level of unemployment at the same time.

Guns

At last, we may have some effective legislation on the use of firearms in this country. A new draft law on guns and armory carries the death penalty for anyone found making, importing, buying or selling unlicensed automatic arms. In some cases, a lesser sentence of up to 15 years hard labor will be imposed for anyone found dealing or manufacturing in arms. The draft, which needs to go through the proper constitutional channels, will also have an article that can impose (for up to four months) those caught shooting. A fine of JD 100 is also imposed. If the offence is repeated, then their license can be revoked.

Night clubs

Night clubs could be having a free ride in Jordan. The High Court has decided to invalidate the decision made by the Minister of Tourism to close down some night clubs in Jordan. The invalidation was based on Article 20 of the High Court Law, but the High Court's decision is only temporary, until the final verdict from the court. The Minister wanted to close some night clubs down, in order to reclassify them according to the Tourism Law.

Upbeat

The Ministry of Labor is in an upbeat mood this week. Following the crackdown on foreign workers, which has been going on in the country for the last two weeks, Ministry officials say that the re-organization of the labour market in Jordan will continue. Further to that, officials say they will not accept anyone into the country who doesn't have a work permit. So far about 75,000 foreign workers have legalized their stay in the country.

Fool and homous

Thank goodness for small mercies. The government has decided not to impose a Sales Tax on popular restaurants. This means that you can eat your foul and homous dishes without the impending fear of a price increase. The decision was based on recommendations from the Amman Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Restaurant and Confectionery Owners.

Free Jordanian prisoners



Families of Jordanian prisoners in Syria demonstrate outside Parliament, Wednesday
Photo by Salah Maikawa

The Arab Human Rights Organization (AHRO) office in Amman has sent several memos to the Syrian Embassy in Amman after receiving complaints from families of Jordanian prisoners in Syrian jails. The organization will hold a meeting this Monday to discuss the complaints of the families of Jordanian detainees in Syria, sources at the AHRO said. A special committee in charge of following up on the conditions of Jordanian prisoners in Syrian jails on Monday called for the release of 1,000 Jordanian prisoners. The committee called on the government, Parliament and political parties to make every possible effort to ensure the release of those prisoners and allow their families to visit them as early as possible.

The committee, staged a sit-in on Wednesday, 14 October in front of parliament. Head of the committee, Imad Sharqawi, said the committee handed a memorandum to the Speaker and members of the Lower House of Parliament, describing the conditions of Jordanians held in Syria. The committee warned that a will stage a sit-in in front of the Syrian Embassy, the International Red Cross Society, the UN and the political parties headquarters if its demands are not met.

Meanwhile, the London-based Amnesty International (AI) welcomed the move by the families of the Jordanian prisoners in Syria, and described it as "more than legitimate." The families have the right to pursue all possible means to know the whereabouts of their sons, to visit them and to make sure that they will receive a fair trial," a source at AI Middle East Desk told Petra on the phone. The source said the organization will do its utmost to support the efforts of these families. He disclosed that AI is keeping an eye on the condition of the detainees in Syrian jails, be they Jordanians, Palestinians, Lebanese or Syrians, most of whom were detained in the 1980s without trials. The sources said AI has recently sent a memorandum to the Syrian government on political prisoners in Syria. The Organization sent another memorandum in 1994 which included the names of hundreds of detainees in Syria, the whereabouts of whom is still a mystery.



His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday received, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Noor and His Royal Highness Prince Hamza Bin Al Hussein, President of the Senate Zeid Rifat, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Sour, and President of the Juridical Council Taher Hikmat. King Hussein, who has just finished his fourth session of chemotherapy, said he is in good health.

Arafat meets Prince Hassan in Amman

AMMAN (Petra)—President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Yasser Arafat arrived in Amman Monday and held talks with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and senior Jordanian officials on the latest developments in the peace process and the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations.

President Arafat was officially received by Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Chief of the Royal Hashemite Court Jawad Anani, Rapporteur of the State Security Council, HRH Prince Talal bin Mohammad and a number of senior officials. A number of high-ranking Palestinian officials also accompanied Mr Arafat, in his short visit to Amman.

Prince Hassan discussed with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat the efforts exerted to overcome the obstacles hindering the peace process. In a joint press conference, the Regent said that his meeting with President Arafat comes within the framework of integrity, of viewpoints. Prince Hassan stressed Jordan's absolute support for the Palestinian brethren in their endeavour to attain their full legitimate rights on their national soil.

The Prince stressed the necessity to reach clear achievements, pointing out Jordan's appreciation to the efforts exerted by the Palestinian leadership to push the peace process forward.

Arafat thanked the Regent for



Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, welcomes Chairman Arafat to Amman

Photo by Khalil Mazra'ee

"the constructive and useful meeting," stressing the importance of consultation with Prince Hassan ahead of his coming visit to Washington. The Prince affirmed the importance of activating economic cooperation between the two countries, pointing out that there are a lot of projects in this respect, approved by His Majesty King Hussein and President Arafat. "We are following up on everything that serves Jordanian and Palestinian people and their

stability," Prince Hassan said.

"The second and third stages of redeployment, as well as the final status talks, form an important stage in our life," Prince Hassan said, stressing that Jordanian and Palestinian efforts are complementary to each other.

The Regent thanked Arafat who said he would visit His Majesty King Hussein during his visit to Washington. "We hope that the two sides would practice wisdom," Prince

Hassan said in response to a question, in the light of the Regent's contacts with Ankara and the other sides, regarding the escalation of tension between Syria and Turkey. Prince Hassan expressed his appreciation to the Egyptian and Iranian role in this respect.

"We seek within our abilities to continuously remind of preempting crises," Prince Hassan said, pointing out that this region needs a collective effort in this crucial situation.

Jordan's archaeological heritage under the spotlight

By Ghassan Joba
Special to The Star

THERE IS a common adage: "Dig up a square meter of land, and you'll find relics." This is as true today as it ever was. No one can deny the importance of archaeology, for our heritage. This is by discovering and preserving relics from as far back as the time man first came on the scene, to the Neolithic period (8500-4500 BC). Archaeology is the scientific study of remains from past human lives and cultures, which helps people to get a better picture of their past. Archaeologists aim to discover and bring back to life past cultures, and save them for future generations. Jordan is an archaeological dream. If a wall were built around her borders, the Kingdom would be the largest museum in the world. Situated at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, the land has been home to a

multitude of civilizations. While Jordanians are rightfully proud of their history, the vitality and spirit of modern Jordanian culture ensures that this legacy continues.

Pursuing this objective, the Friends of Archaeology (FOA) held the first "National Cultural Heritage Week," under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor. The focus was on "Protecting Archaeological Heritage," and it is hoped that this festival will become an annual event.

The week long festival began on 9 October, and was presided over by HRH Prince Ra'ad Bin Zeid, who in his opening remarks said, "With the rapid pace of development and increased tourism expected to come to Jordan, the protection of our archaeological treasures has become an urgent national duty that must be shared among individual citizens, public authorities and the private sector." The Prince also appealed to teachers and parents to involve children in the processes of securing our heritage, to ensure that "the keys to our identity would be safely handed onto the next generation."

The opening ceremony of the heritage week was held at the Amman Citadel (Al Qal'a). The site was chosen as it represents the continuity of human settlement in Jordan, from the early settlers who lived there semi-permanently or in caves, to the present inhabitants of today's civilization. A march took place after the speeches, headed by Prince Ra'ad, to which hundreds of people participated, carrying banners calling for the protection of antiquities—some bearing the heritage week's slogan saying "The future of our past is in our hands." Various concerned institutions and agencies in Jordan, also participate in the symbolic walk from the Citadel, down to and along the main street of downtown Amman, and ending up at the Amman Municipal Hall in Ras Al

Ain.

On their arrival at the City Hall, Prince Ra'ad opened the cultural exhibition, which was open to the public all last week, ending yesterday (14 October). The exhibition contained many artifacts, including displays on excavation and conservation work conducted by various archaeological institutes, NGOs and governmental agencies. A book corner was also on the display, along with an exhibition of art by children and students.

The exhibition was largely funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the content of the displays was supervised by a committee made up from the FOA, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and the CIDA.

"The FOA's main objective is to engage the general public, especially the young people, and to create a wide awareness of our cultural resources and the importance of archaeology," FOA President Leen Fakhoury, told The Star. She said that the committee works to protect and preserve ancient sites in Jordan, and it supports excavations and contributes to the restoration and conservation of antiquities, in cooperation with the Dept of Antiquities (DOA), national municipalities and concerned institutions, both regional and international.

The FOA was founded in 1958 by a small group of international and Jordanian archaeologists, who wanted to expand the public's awareness for their heritage. It works under guidelines first published in 1962, and operates under the auspices of

the DOA. The FOA became an independent society on 27 September 1990.

The need for the institution is greater than ever, since the Kingdom is experiencing a sharp increase in tourism-related construction all around many archaeological sites. Diligent and collective efforts are needed from both the public and private sectors, in order to ensure that the economic expansion takes place without any detriment to the archaeological heritage.

"We hope that this week's activi-

exhibitions and lectures, both inside and outside Amman, to meet this goal. "The department was first opened in Jerash in 1923, during the British Mandate, and was removed later to Amman to become a public institution," Mrs Naghawi told The Star.

During the heritage week, the FOA announced a new initiative to the fight to save artifacts and historical sites. Public Service Announcements are being broadcast on national television for the next few months, on a regular basis. The main purpose of these billboards is to highlight the dangers facing antiquities in Jordan, and spark discussion among policy makers. The FOA also produced a discussion guide, available in English and Arabic, to encourage teachers and parents to talk more with their children about the issue, and to supplement their schoolwork with assignments, outings and creative projects.

The closing ceremony will be held tonight (15 October) at the Odeon. It is promised to be an excellent cultural evening, with the dramatic recital of an Arabic play, "Al Deil" (The Circle), written by Mrs Hayat Huwail Atieh. The play presents, through the legend of the two forces of fertility, Ba'al and Ashur, a solution to contemporary problems by drawing upon the resources of our cultural heritage. Ashur reminds the people that death cannot bury our living culture, if intellectuals keep it alive and renew it for future generations. The National Cultural Heritage Week hopes to be the spark that will light the fire in all Jordanians, to protect and conserve the many archaeological sites in the Kingdom.



Prince Ra'ad with Leen Fakhoury

ties will encourage Jordanians to find out more about antiquities," adds Ms Fakhoury, who likes to define herself as an architect/conservationist. She said that antiquities not only have visual appeal, as they have social, religious and cultural importance as well.

Ayda Naghawi, a representative from the DOA, said that a special bureau was established in 1988 under the name of "Department of Awareness", to inform the public on the importance of protecting the national heritage. The bureau holds annual

ress cocktail

Edited by Ibtihal Odeh

The national dialogue

THE SO-CALLED national dialogue was given extra weight, especially in the light of the formation of a ministerial committee headed by Prime Minister Fayez Al Tarawneh to determine its objectives and mechanisms. However, there are many differing views on the issue.

Abu Yazan in *Ad Dustour* says the national dialogue is an admission of the presence of a general crisis that is manifested in the internal situation, especially regarding the levels of poverty and unemployment. The idea of a national dialogue is also an indicator of the state of Jordan's relations with other Arab countries, and its attitudes towards the peace process.

Some say the national dialogue expresses a genuine desire to share the responsibility with public opinion. Others see it as a way of ending the alienation of the opposition, and to reach a unified set of views and visions. However, Abu Yazan is not too sure about this idea of alienation. Although there was a major crisis between the previous government and the opposition, things have not reached the stage of alienation.

A national dialogue should enable us to understand our differences and ways of living with them. The National Charter set out the common denominators for the dialogue. However, as soon as they were established, they were quickly shelved. Both the government and political parties need to refer to the simple and practical rules of democracy.

The writer says that there has been a national dialogue on a daily basis for sometime now. For instance, political parties have their own newspapers, and their general secretaries are columnists in either daily or weekly newspapers. Everyday, we hear about workshops, roundtables and seminars. With all this activity going on, it will be easy for those interested in public affairs to know the various agendas of political parties.

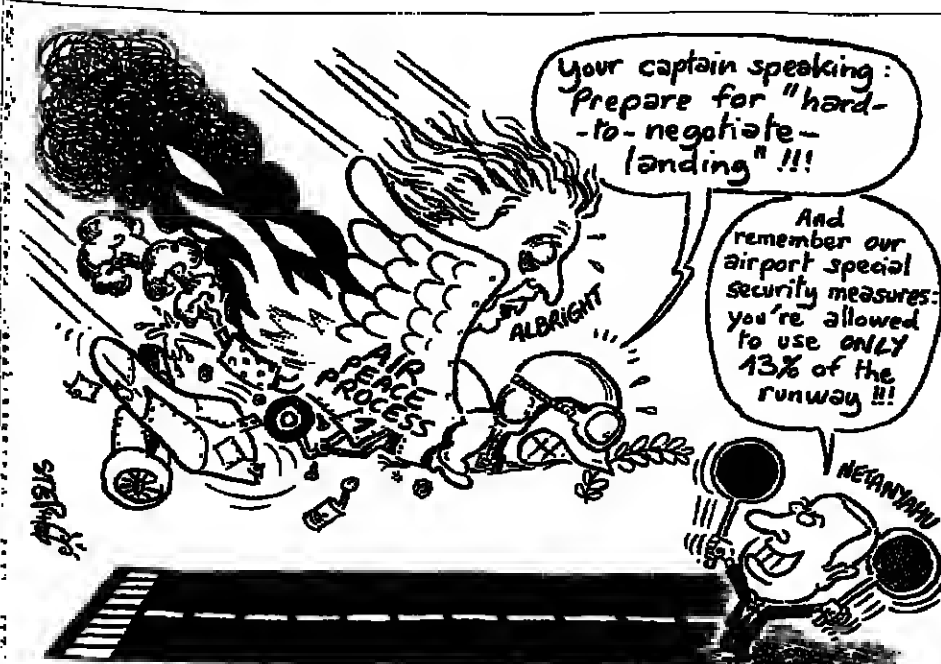
Abu Yazan underlines the fact that it would be dangerous to limit national dialogue to a number of closed meetings, and to make a declaration of principles from them. We should try to establish the instruments of dialogue between the government and the opposition, and between political parties. This also applies to members of the same party as well, because parties in Jordan tend to reject internal pluralism, whilst fighting vehemently for it in the state and society.

Mohamed Naji Amayra writing in *Al Arab Al Yawm* on the other hand gives a much more robust view of the importance of the national dialogue. We need to be more frank and open in facing the problems of the nation, on all fronts, whether it be political, social, economic or cultural. Many questions come to mind at the outset of the dialogue, some of which concern the participants and the mechanisms of the dialogue. Amayra points out that these questions should be answered by the diverse sections of society before looking towards the government for answers.

For the dialogue to be successful it should be comprehensive, wide and ongoing. It should cover all political allegiances, professional associations, cultural and social formations of society. The dialogue should also evolve around policies not people, and around programs not theories. Once it starts, it will become the mechanism for decision-making. It will facilitate the application of any decisions, because all sections of society will have cooperated in influencing such decisions.

The priorities of this dialogue are the urgent public issues like poverty, unemployment, corruption, development, reform, debts and dealing with the economic recession.

This dialogue must have as its reference point the Constitution, National Charter and the Establishment of the Crown. His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, set out the momentum for this dialogue by meeting representatives of political and social organizations, as well as professional and public representatives. The point about this dialogue is to achieve the goals set out at the beginning, and to make them as institutionalized as possible, through the means of working committees and sub-committees.



Our Say...

Small men, big moments

THE APPOINTMENT of "superhawk" Ariel Sharon as Israel's foreign minister has triggered legitimate speculation about its impact on the Middle East peace process and the forthcoming Wye Plantation summit between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is feared, and rightly too, that Sharon will be the greatest hurdle to a breakthrough in the 19-month dead-locked peace process. His inimical attitude towards Arafat and his support for the expansion of settlements on the West Bank make it clear that he is not really the man to help break the ice. His sinister role in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps is still fresh in memory, and that makes it doubly difficult to accept his credentials as a peacemaker. It is being argued that Netanyahu is really shooting over the shoulder of Sharon, and that it is the best way of scuttling the negotiations. There are also those who point out that it was Sharon who persuaded Menachem Begin to adopt the Camp David agreement in 1978, and cede the settlements in Sinai. They argue that it is possible that Sharon could once again play the unlikely role of a peacemaker 20 years later. And that peace made with a hawk is more reliable than peace made with a dove. Though it makes apparently logical sense, it is not realistic enough.

The problem with Sharon and Netanyahu is that they are too eager to live up to their reputation of being uncompromising, and they would go to any absurd length to retain that image. Politicians who are prisoners of images make unreliable negotiators, and that is the crux of the problem. Israel today is in need of leaders who face up to the reality of a Palestinian state, which is inherent in the logic of the Oslo Accords.

It requires both political farsightedness and moral courage to accept the logic of history. Arafat, despite the many flaws in his politics and strategy, has shown that courage. During the 1970s and 1980s he was a relentless hawk himself, but when the time came for talks and peace, he displayed the courage to rise to the occasion and sit at the negotiating table. The man who made the famous gesture between the gun and olive branch at the UN General Assembly years ago, did not hesitate to hold on to the olive branch and let go the gun. And he is standing by the peace process despite the despairing deadlock.

It is this heroism that is lacking in Israeli leaders. They are literally playing to the gallery of increasingly diminishing numbers of extremists at home—slowly but surely those wanting peace within Israel is on the rise—and seeking short-term popularity. Momentous decisions in history can never be made by small men. Netanyahu and Sharon have to decide whether they want to remain small politicians or big leaders.



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Ariel Sharon

The pragmatic bulldozer

By Star Staff Writer

ARIEL SHARON, Israel's burly, baw-kish hero is back on the scene. He was named as Israel's new foreign minister last week, by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Sharon, 70, is currently the national infrastructure minister, and he will keep this post as well for the next three months, until a replacement is found. His influence, however, goes way beyond just infrastructure, as he is one of the three ministers in Netanyahu's so-called "kitchen cabinet."

Palestinians were mostly dismayed at the new appointment, seeing Sharon as a war criminal. It was Sharon who led the Israeli army into Lebanon in 1982.

Chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, described the appointment as "dangerous," saying that Netanyahu had "opted to appease Jewish settlers, at the expense of peace." However, the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said that the matter was "purely an internal affair."

This echoes the stance taken by Jordan, which is of the opinion that what really matters is Israeli policy towards the peace process and the Palestinian issue.

Political analysts, however, have linked the timing of this new appointment with the upcoming peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian officials, due to be held later today, 15 October, at the Wye Plantation retreat, outside Washington.

The leading Israeli hawk is known for his hostile attitude towards the Palestinians, and rarely makes concessions. The talks will include, in particular, the US proposal for a 13 percent Israeli redeployment from the West Bank, in exchange for guarantees of tighter Palestinian security measures.

Some analysts have said that the appointment is a direct result of US President Bill Clinton's decision to put pressure on Netanyahu to reach an agreement with the Palestinians.

Sharon is viewed by many Israelis as the only man who could secure a satisfactory deal in the crucial "final status" talks with the Palestinians, when tackling the thorny issues like the Jewish settlements, border controls, the status of Jerusalem and the problem of

refugees.

Although the two sides have now agreed on the 13 percent figure, there still remains a problem in the actual identification of the land to be redeployed. In the past, Sharon has argued vocally against a handover of any more than nine percent of the West Bank, saying that Israel's security would be compromised.

"We must keep certain terrain in our hands, especially the high ground," he told reporters.

Sharon has even said that he would not shake the hand of Mr Arafat, although the Palestinian Chairman has

Israeli army into Beirut (Israel's most unpopular war), which ended in the expulsion of Mr Arafat and his comrades from Lebanon. The war had other consequences, namely the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians by the pro-Israeli Lebanese Christian militiamen in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Sharon was removed from office in 1983, following an Israeli tribunal which linked him indirectly to the killings, but he still remained an influential character in Israeli politics.

After the Likud-led coalition came to power in 1996, Netanyahu bowed to pressure and included the former army

general in his cabinet. "He is the most important suited person in Israel for the foreign affairs post," Netanyahu told a

press conference. "People shouldn't deal with hypones. His record throughout his life, both public and private, is one that the Israeli people can be proud of," Netanyahu added.

Netanyahu has handled the foreign ministry portfolio himself ever since January, when David Levy resigned in anger at the way the peace process and social affairs were being handled.

Sharon's attitude to negotiating was well demonstrated recently, when he

championed a plan to deploy American Apache combat helicopters to fire rockets into Gaza, Ramallah and Nablus to stop demonstrators. Netanyahu had originally

accepted the plan, but turned away from it after advisors said that it would lead to outright war.

The reaction from the Arab World to the appointment of Sharon has been intense. The official Syrian newspaper, *Tishrin*, described his appointment as "the bullet of mercy for the Middle East peace process," whilst the Lebanese *Al-Nahar*, said the announcement was "tantamount to a disaster."

The Qatari newspapers called Sharon "the butcher of Palestinian blood," and the most implacable and hateful Jew. Although the current Israeli government is considered to be the most extremist of its kind for a long while, an interim peace agreement is expected to be reached this week in Washington. This is, of course, assuming that Ariel Sharon does not throw a spanner into the works.

Knowledge is a double-edged sword

By Kunda Dixit

KATHMANDU—The scriptures were right: "Knowledge is a sword, and wisdom is a shield." Perhaps nowhere is the raw power of knowledge as relevant today as it is for the two-thirds of the world's people who live in the countries of the South.

Everyday in countless homes across the developing world, knowledge makes the difference between life and death.

A Nepali child in a remote hamlet in the Himalayas is dehydrated by diarrhea, but his young mother is brought up to believe that under no circumstances should water be given to her child. Information countering this belief is contained in posters at rural health centers, and is broadcast over Radio Nepal every day, but the knowledge has not reached her.

In a country where 80 percent of all children who die are killed by water-borne diseases, this knowledge-gap can be fatal. In all of South Asia, five million children die every year before their fifth birthday from diarrhea dehydration, simple infections and measles. Most of these deaths can easily be prevented if knowledge about prevention is more readily available.

The challenge is to get the information to where it is needed as cheaply as possible. Only when information helps people communicate, participate and allows them and their rulers to make informed choices does that information become

knowledge.

As new technologies make it possible to move more information faster than ever before, we are dazzled by the millions of gigabytes that move across the world in nanoseconds. We are infatuated by handwidth, by digital television and gadgets and gizmos. Yet we hardly question the quality of the information: What is it that we are communicating? Is it relevant? Will it make the world a better place? And does all this information add up to knowledge?

South Asia, home to a fifth of the world's population, is today within the footprint of at least 50 broadcast satellites. In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh alone there are more than 70 million households with television sets, adding up to a total viewership of 300 million. By 2007, there will be 550 million television viewers in these countries. Half of them will be hooked up to cable—able to watch the 350 channels that will be available by then.

Advances in information technology are supposed to shrink distances, but they don't necessarily bring people together. Better communications through satellite may give people a wider array of programming to choose from, but it does not guarantee greater tolerance to diversity. In the short term, better communications appears to highlight differences between peoples.

In India and Pakistan, people tune in to each other's television programs, but

what they watch has deepened hatreds, making it more difficult to spread the word about peace in a newly-nuclear region.

When these prejudices about the "other" have been nurtured from childhood through textbooks that portray the neighboring country as the enemy, one has to ask whether governments take the bold saying about knowledge being a sword too literally.

Satellite television in its own way has diluted the impact of student domestic broadcast media, not for any altruistic reasons, but because it has audiences (or markets) on both sides of the border.

But even here, the enormous potential for satellite broadcasts to spread volatile knowledge has already been seen in the speed with which sectarian riots spread across India and Pakistan in December 1992 after the destruction of a mosque by Hindu zealots in the Indian town of Ayodhya was broadcast in near-real time via satellite.

Knowledge may be a sword, but is double-edged. The delivery mechanisms for knowledge today are in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Globally, media ownership reflects the supranational ownership patterns of other worldwide businesses. More and more of the message propagates a global consumer monoculture that generates waste, perpetuates economic disparities and is environmentally disastrous.

It also leaves more and

more poor people out of the knowledge loop. They have lost the knowledge they had, and what has replaced it is neither relevant nor useful.

In many ways, it is just like the loss of genetic diversity. High-yield hybrid seeds have replaced a rich variety of local cereals across the world, improving harvests but also making the crops more susceptible to disease and dependent on costly inputs of agrochemicals.

Globalization of media subliminally spreads information that eats into traditional knowledge bases and indigenous processes that are best equipped to deal with local conditions.

New information technologies offer a chance for South Asia to leapfrog technology, level the playing field and democratize information to usher in an era where better communications will spread useful knowledge. But going by recent history, the chances of this happening are dim: the poor will be the last to use the technologies, or benefit from them.

History teaches that technology by itself is never the answer. The corporate values that drive the Information Age are the very values that drove the Industrial Age. Things will be no different with the Internet or satellite television; it all depends on who gets to control these technologies, who gets to use it and how they use it.

Fanos

Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek War of words

THE PROVOCATIVE Syrian war of words aimed at Jordan hardly helped the former case when it tried to draw the attention of the Arab World to the escalating dispute with Turkey.

Jordan finds itself in a very awkward situation, but it is vital for the interest of greater Arab union that Jordan responds diplomatically. The realisation game serves nobody's interest in the long run.

In the last Gulf War we paid the price for being too 'Arab'. Now, there is an attempt to make us pay the price for lacking in Arabism! There is an obvious Syrian attempt to accuse Jordan of working against any Arab world alliance. Much talk has been made of a secret tri-pact between Jordan, Israel and Turkey, which aims to undermine the whole Arab region. You just have to look at who are the largest trading partners with Jordan (Iraq, Saudi Arabia etc.) to see how non-sensical this suggestion really is.

The Syrian accusations have been made to make out that Jordan is a nation in conflict; that she is conspiring with the enemy. The aim can only be to increase Arab suspicion on Jordan, to interfere with our national strategic decisions, and to make the Kingdom hostage to the caprices of others.

The escalation in the war of words will go against the interests of all nations in the region. It is a major crime that at a time when the region needs solidarity, we are engaged in petty name calling.

If the original purpose is not to have alliances in the area, then let us all respect each other's security, and work together towards diffusing the tension that exists between us. Progress cannot be made in this current climate of accusation. Trust and sensitivity should be at the forefront in all dealings between brotherly neighbors, and we should have confidence in the virtues of mediation and goodwill.

It is high time that we pause and reflect on this current phenomenon of distortion, which can only have a dangerous and unacceptable outcome. Why is it that everyone our Syrian brothers make a statement of this kind, it is immediately taken as the epitome of Arabism and heroism? Surely, actions are stronger than words, and since it's formation, the Hashemite Kingdom has been constantly involved in action. Name calling should be left in the playground.

Jordan does not indulge in bombastic statements, but there have always been attempts by others to misinterpret our position when convenient. At a time when Jordan has never been clearer on its aims and intentions, we must ask what is it that other nations are expecting from us?

Rather than flogging and degrading each other, we ought to sit together as Arabs and step beyond all the defunct promises that have been made in the past, and make a new beginning that would take into consideration the reality of our region and the circumstances that govern all of us.

However, as time passes, it seems that individual Arab countries are willing to choose and chart their own course, looking at events, irrespective of their neighbors' opinions. Let us set a precedent among each other by stopping the usage of double-standards in inter-Arab relations and affairs.

There are countless inter-Arab agreements that have been signed and sealed, but then are left on the shelf at the Arab League. The same goes for agreements signed among our Muslim brother states as well, which are gathering dust in the archives of the Muslim World Conference.

A concerted effort is needed by every partner in Arab region, guaranteeing solidarity and ensuring that the issues that need the most attention are addressed with speed and dedication.

Business scene

■ Sources at Amman Chamber of Industry disclosed that overall Jordanian imports from Germany stood at JD 291 million last year, while the volume of Jordanian exports to that country reached JD 17 million for the same year. This means that the trade balance is well in favour of the latter. Jordanian imports from Germany include machines, medicines, chemical instruments, whilst Jordan exports are mainly made up of phosphate, and fruits and vegetables.

■ The volume of statutory reserves at The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) reached JD 482.9 million last week. The surplus reserve totaled JD 42 million (including one-night deposits), in addition to the JD 40 million of deposit certificates due on 17 October 1998. The overall repurchase contracts concluded with the Central Bank were about JD 6 million up until mid October.

■ The German Reconstruction Bank endorsed an additional soft loan worth DM 30 million, to be granted to Jordan in order to help the Kingdom convert the waste water from Amman to Khirbeh Al Samrah. This brings the total amount of loaned money for this project to DM 89.5 million.

■ Iraq was Jordan's biggest trading partner during August. According to statistics revealed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the top 10 trading nations with Jordan are Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, the European Union, Sudan, South Korea, Germany and Italy respectively. The total volume of trade exchange between Jordan and these countries totaled JD70.27 million last month.

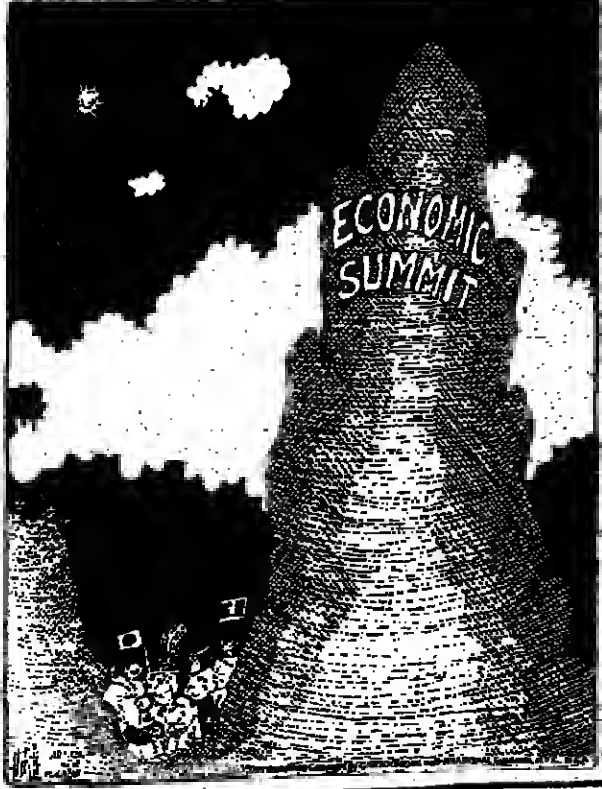
■ The scientific committee at the Jordanian Society for Quality, has recently organized a seminar in cooperation with Jordan Export Development and Certification Centre (JEDCC) during which the assistant director of TÜV Management Service spoke about all the services offered by the company and their ISO 9000 certification. TÜV is represented in Jordan by Ibrahim Al Naouri group's Middle East, Survey Co. The seminar was attended by the Society's chairman Dr Mohammed Al Halaykah, JEDCC's director general Mr Farouk Al Hajdidi, director general of Al Naouri group Mr Ibrahim Al Naouri and other members from the industrial and services sectors.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 14 October

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFR	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1235
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Lurie's NewsCartoon



The diversification of transport is a must

By Ibrahim Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

TRANSPORT SERVICES in all its different forms—land, sea and air—continues to play a major role in shaping the Kingdom's economic activity, and contributes greatly to the national coffers. This sector accounts for approximately 30 percent of all economic activity in Jordan, so a healthy transport sector is a necessity.

Realizing the importance of this sector, local operators involved in all forms of transport are doing their utmost to offer competitive services, at an affordable cost.

Leading the way in Jordan is Al Naouri Group, which started to offer such services about five years ago, and coupled with the vision of its energetic managing director, Mr Ibrahim Al Naouri, it has been able to advance greatly in this short time period. Paying special attention to the transportation of cargo at the Aqaba national port, Ammon Shipping and Transport, an affiliate of the group, were rewarded the agency of the world's highest shipping line, Evergreen. Their operations through Aqaba commenced

in 1994. "We were able to expand our area of scope greatly with Evergreen, so that now we can cover all the world practically," said Mr Al Naouri in an interview with The Star. Such a move benefited both Jordanian exporters and importers immensely, as it opened up new markets that were previously unreachable.

To increase the level of transport services at Aqaba, Ammon Shipping & Naouri

Transport incorporated inspection facilities, whilst complying with the Saudi Arabia Standards Organization (SASO). This is because the Saudi market is of major importance to Jordanian exporters, and by making them acquainted with SASO specifications and conditions, the Jordanian products now have free access to the Saudi market. Al Naouri added (A full article was published on this matter in

The Star's 17 September issue).

Speaking on the proposal to transform Aqaba into a free trade zone, the director said, "If the proposal comes to fruition, it would help to raise the capacity of the port, which can only be good for Jordan." However, Al Naouri elaborated that the proposal needs further study, and that the current rules governing free trade zones in Jordan would need to be amended to take into account Aqaba's unique characteristics.

Holding a BA from the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Jordan, Al Naouri has worked in the shipping field for twenty years now. He commented on reports that had said that some merchants were diverting the goods away from Aqaba to Haifa. "The amount of ships involved are minimal, and there will be no negative impact on the harbor. We are doing our best to enhance the movement of goods at Aqaba, which functions as the main source of livelihood for the 70,000

population of the port city." Al Naouri confirmed. However, he suggested that the floatation of charges for handling and delivery of goods at the port, especially regarding Iraqi shipments, could help in boosting output from the harbor.

Al Naouri group activities are not only restricted to shipping. Tourism is also the agenda. "Our belief in the future growth of the tourism sector was behind the establishment of Green Meadows Travel and Tourism, which aims to fully participate in the development of the tourism industry and the export of Jordan worldwide," the

director added. In all their activities, the group gives emphasis to upgrading their services and complying with international specifications and standards. Three subsidiaries of the group are already ISO 9000 certified. The group also established an affiliation with Near East Inspection Co., to introduce the services of the German giant TÜV, which is one of the biggest European companies in ISO 9000 certification. So far, the TÜV management service has certified 15 Jordanian companies, and another five are due to be certified very soon.

CERTIFICATE

The Certification Body of TÜV Management Service GmbH certifies that

Ministry of Public Works & Housing
Directorate of Labs. & Researches
Amman - Jordanian

has established and maintains a Quality System for

- Technical Supervision (K.C., Construction Materials and Geotechnical)
- Human Resources Development

An Audit was performed, Report No. 24025891
Proof has been furnished that the requirements according to DIN EN ISO 9002:1994 are fulfilled. The certificate is valid until August 2001
Certificate Registration No. 12 100 9981 TMS
Munich, 1998-09-12

Ministry of Public Works is first in government to become ISO certified

Economic gloom spreads, with no end of clouds in sight

By Craig Gordon, Drew Fetherston and Susan Harrigan

WHEN THE most serious threat to the world economy since World War II really got started on July 2, 1997, most Americans barely even noticed. The news was easy to miss. Thailand, a South East Asian country, little bigger than California, decided it could no longer afford to protect the value of its money. Within six months the devalued currency had lost half its purchasing power.

If it had been limited to Thailand, international agencies might have been able to patch up the problem, and the world might never have entered the phase "Asian contagion."

But now Americans can't escape the news of global economic crisis. The crisis that once seemed so distant—even as it tore through Thailand's neighbors, then Japan and then Russia—has landed on US

shores with a roar, jerking Wall Street back to earth and threatening to end one of the longest economic expansions in US history.

Many economists now figure the United States has no better than a 50-50 chance of avoiding a recession in the next two years. "I would say the best of the 1990s is behind us, at least in economic terms," said Cynthia Latta, the principal US economist for DRI, a McGraw Hill-owned forecasting firm in Lexington, Mass.

A recession? Just a few months ago, commentators were tripping over themselves to come up with superlatives to describe the strength of the US economy. In many parts of the country, there is little evidence of a slowdown. Jobs are being created, wages are rising, homes are being bought and sold and consumers are still out in force.

But nationally, the signs of wear around the edges of the economy are starting to show. Last week two major multinational companies, Raytheon and Gillette, announced major layoffs tied to the global crisis.

Blame the sudden turnaround on what might be called the dark side of globalization—the linkages among countries and economies on far-flung sides of the globe. Even though the links may seem small and indirect, they're not. US companies have increasingly looked overseas for sales and profits, and they did well when economies in places such as Asia were some of the fastest-growing in the world.

These same companies suffer when their overseas customers can no longer afford to buy their products. Meanwhile, they also are hurting from competition with low-priced

imports, which are coming from some of the same countries that are in trouble, as they try to sell goods here to help the economies back home.

Even the stock market losses are starting to become more real for Americans, who have enjoyed a bull market throughout the 1990s. As investors start receiving third-quarter mutual fund and 401(k) statements showing losses virtually everywhere, they could get scared and stop spending, contributing to a slowdown.

Consumer confidence already is slipping. The crisis has spread and shows little sign of letting up anytime soon. There also is a growing sense that no one knows exactly how to stop it—and if they do, they're not willing to take the bitter medicine needed to get through it.

Even a meeting last week in Washington of the two agencies best positioned to help, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, produced little in the way of a concrete attack plan.

What's most worrying is that financial problems act like a communicable disease, spreading from one nation to another. Thus the crisis that struck Malaysia and Thailand last year went on to affect Indonesia and South Korea. It savaged Japan's hopes for a recovery from its long economic slide and spread further to wreck Russia's system.

Coconuts now are focused on Latin America, where Brazil's currency is under strong pressure, though an IMF rescue package may be ready by this week.

In part this is due to the actions of international speculators, who bet billions of dollars that various currencies would

collapse, and in so doing may have caused just such collapses.

But the spread of these fiscal diseases is also fostered by human emotion. An IMF report noted, "A key problem is that financial markets tend, in the face of such a shock (as the current world financial crisis), to be characterized by panic and herd instinct, and do not discriminate between strong and weak economies."

The bottom line? The IMF, which earlier had said the world economy would grow by three percent this year, now thinks growth may be only 2 percent. The World Bank says, "Some academic economists warn that the Fund may be optimistic in predicting two percent growth."

Until recently, US investors appeared to view the crisis as a faraway storm that might very well blow itself out or veer away before reaching this continent.

Thailand's devaluation, seen in retrospect as the trigger for today's troubles, caused barely a ripple in US markets at the time. Although the Dow Jones industrial average plunged sharply in October 1997 because of troubles in the Hong Kong market, it recovered quickly and soared to an all-time high of 9,338 by July.

But now the storm has come ashore. A belated recognition that the new global economy can drag down US stocks, as well as prop them up, has caused the US stock market to give up all of its 1998 gains.

Last week, the crises in Asia, Russia and Latin America began to surface in many American homes in the form of disappointing third-quarter results from mutual funds and retirement plans. With the

exception of funds indexed to the Standard & Poor's 500, which eked out an average 2.5-percent gain for the year, US general equity funds all lost money on average in the first three quarters of 1998, according to Lipper Analytical Services. Analysts now are forecasting a 4.2 percent loss for all US companies in the third quarter, compared to their expectations of a 9.6 percent third-quarter gain as recently as July, according to Joseph Abbott, a research manager for I.B.E.S. Inc., a company that monitors such forecasts. I.B.E.S. also expects analysts to lower their fourth-quarter and 1998 predictions.

Malaysia in \$1.2 billion bail-out of Renong

By Ted Bardacke

RENONG-UEM, Malaysia's troubled infrastructure conglomerate, was bailed out by the government this week with M\$4.5bn (\$1.2bn) for a restructuring, leaving shareholders with majority control.

The restructuring plan, which is also likely to include a write-down by commercial lenders, is the latest twist in the rescue of Renong, once the investment arm of the ruling Umno political party.

Last year, Renong was saved by a controversial deal which involved its subsidiary, UEM, buying a stake in it—a move that pushed down prices on the Malaysian stock market by around six per cent.

Under the latest plan, the Malaysian government will set up an Infrastructure Development Corporation which will issue M\$10.5bn in long-term zero-coupon bonds. Of these, M\$6bn would be used to settle debts of UEM and purchase some of Renong's debts. The bonds would be serviced by cash flow from the road itself.

The remaining M\$4.5bn of IDC bonds are likely to be more controversial for both taxpayers and lenders. They will be exchanged for an equal amount of commercial lending for three infrastructure projects in which Renong has a stake, including a toll road, light rail system and the national railway. The government will

receive equity in the projects but Renong will retain majority control.

Although the nominal value of that exchange will be the same, the bonds will not be serviced until after 2004. Because they represent sovereign risk, they are likely to carry lower interest rates than current commercial debt.

Bank lenders have not yet agreed to the exchange and bondholders have not been consulted about the plan. "In an open economy there would be hell to pay for this," said one analyst. "But with capital controls in place and a banking crisis on our hands, this plan has a great deal of internal logic to it."

The bonds will be serviced by future tax receipts from PLUS—money that would normally go directly to the Treasury. Renong, which recently reported losses of M\$818m to June 30 compared with a profit of M\$703m last year, said the government benefited from the deal because it wouldn't have to take over the projects directly and pay back lenders up front.

With Renong-UEM possibly accounting for between 5 and 8 per cent of total lending by Malaysian banks, the overall taxpayer bill for the rescue of the country's banking system may decline due to the plan. IDC could eventually be used for other troubled projects as well, analysts said.

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Madison

Iraqi cancer children receive aid from Independent readers

By Robert Fisk

IT WAS only a refrigerated truck, backing into the broken loading bay of a Baghdad hospital, a squad of sweating Iraqis heaving the boxes from the tailboard and hauling them into the building atop old refuse carts. Across town at the Mansour hospital, we had to use a stretcher to transport the 5,815kg of medicines, stuffing the painfully expensive vinchrestine into the director's personal fridge. A bit of an anti-climax, you might say—until you saw the army of children in the wards upstairs. Weeping with pain, or smiling in innocence of their fate, the cancer children of Iraq—in Mosul, Basra and Baghdad—have, at last, received the almost £100,000 worth of medicines contributed by readers of *The Independent* after the paper's coverage of their plight last March.

"Have you brought something for me?" a little girl asked, as Dr Selma Al Haddad told her quietly that all drugs must be shared equally among the children. In one corner of the cancer ward, Hebbia Mortaba lay in a blue dress, a hideous tumour distorting her tiny figure, her mother watching helplessly.

Given United Nations sanctions and Saddam Hussein's own ban on medicine

imports, it was, in truth, something of a miracle that our truck made it across the Iraqi desert, finally shepherded around the country's hospitals by the charity, CARE's two indomitable Iraqi representatives, Marga-

cluded. The British documentation at the UN referred to the medical payment as "readers' donations from [the] *Independent* newspaper."

The 58 cartons and boxes of drugs flown from Heath-

row to Amman by Royal Jordanian airlines, and then trucked the 500-miles to Baghdad, have been equally distributed to children's hospitals across Iraq.

But were we in time? The truth should be told. Most of the children whose suffering we recounted last February are dead—even the little boy whose portrait became the symbol for *The Independent's* appeal—and most of

the tiny children I have seen in Iraq will die too. Dr Jawad Ali told me in Basra. "But you must understand what your people have done, they have helped to prolong these small lives, and to improve the quality of life of these children. They are going to die in one month, two months, two years...yes, perhaps a few will live...believe me, it is worth bringing your drugs here."

Touring the children's cancer wards, I listened to the same awful stories I heard in February, of families untouched by leukemia until the 1991 Gulf War, of children who brought home pieces of American and British shells and bombs that were almost certainly contaminated with uranium, of parents caught in Allied bombing whose children—born in some cases, long after the war—have developed tumours.

For all of them, *Independent* readers have brought relief.

It would have been satisfying to report that *Independent* contributions had saved dozens, perhaps hundreds of lives. But that would be myth. Yet, our drugs are full courses, "two years' treatment that can provide a cure, and they will prolong the lives of the innocent. For, perhaps, just a handful, they will also provide the gift of life."



An Iraqi mother comforts her child as they wait for long overdue treatment

Pakistan's National Assembly votes to introduce sharia law

By Farhan Bokhari and Mark Nicholson

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan's lower house approved a controversial law to enshrine the constitutional supremacy of Islamic "sharia" law. The law has exposed deep divisions between hard-core Islamists and liberals over the role of religion in the state according to the Financial Times.

The National Assembly passed the law by more than a two-thirds majority, the first step towards establishing overriding authority to the Koran and Islamic teachings over the country's constitution, while also granting the government sweeping powers to implement and reinterpret existing laws.

However, the bill still requires approval from the Senate, where the Muslim League party of Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister, does not command a majority. Mr Sharif's party swept to power in February last year, winning more than two-thirds of the lower house.

Mr Sharif introduced the bill last month claiming it was necessary to provide greater justice to the country's poor. However, critics say the move

was a political expedient designed to placate Pakistan's well-organized and highly vocal Islamic groups. Opposition parties yesterday said the law would give the government arbitrary and extra-constitutional powers.

Mr Sharif proposed the sharia bill soon after US missile attacks in August on terrorist training camps in neighbouring Afghanistan, allegedly run by the Saudi terrorist "mastermind" Osama bin Laden. The bombing triggered widespread protests from Islamic groups, already angered by Mr Sharif's moves towards signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty following Pakistan's nuclear blasts in May. Islamists see the move as a capitulation to the US.

The bill is a diluted version of Mr Sharif's initial proposal, removing provisions which would have allowed parliament to effect constitutional changes with a simple parliamentary majority, rather than the current two-thirds required. Nevertheless, opposition groups yesterday suggested that the bill would still enable the government to ride roughshod over existing constitutional rights.

Aitzaz Ahsan, a lawyer and senator

for the opposition Pakistan People's party, said: "This law will be supra-constitutional. All the fundamental rights for women and minorities are going to be in jeopardy."

The bill has also aroused anger from women activists. Some say they are still haunted by memories from the Islamisation of the 1980s under General Zia ul Haq, the last military dictator. One proposal then said that the evidence of one man was equal to that of two women.

Ayesha Khan, one of a small group protesting outside the parliament yesterday, said: "Whenever there is a move for Islamisation, whatever is implementable is against the interests of women and non-Muslim people."

Controversy surrounding the bill is likely to deepen political uncertainties in Pakistan, already wrestling with a crippling economic crisis sparked by the imposition of sanctions after its nuclear tests. Earlier this week General Jehangir Karamat, Pakistan's chief of army staff, resigned after making an uncharacteristically outspoken speech criticising poor management of the economy and in foreign policy.



A Syrian reads a local magazine in Damascus, 13 October to follow the latest developments in the Syrian-Turkish crisis over Syria's alleged support for the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which is seeking self-rule in southeast Turkey. The last two weeks have brought Ankara and Damascus close to an armed conflict that many fear could spread across the region.

Iran says it repelled attack by Afghanistan's Taliban

By John Daniszewski

TEHRAN—Iran claimed this week to have beaten back an attack on a remote border post by Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia, saying it inflicted heavy casualties in what would mark the two sides' first armed face-off after more than a month of threats and saber-rattling.

The Taliban, however, dismissed the Iranian claims of a three-hour battle as propaganda, saying that any such engagement had even taken place. Iran's report of fighting could not be verified independently because observers have been denied access to the border areas.

Even if some encounter did occur, it appeared doubtful that it represented the start of a much-feared war between Shiite Muslim-run Iran and the mainly Sunni Muslim Taliban. Iranian spokesmen said calm conditions had resumed all along the border between the two countries, reported the LA Times-Washington Post News Service.

Iran and the Taliban, an extremist force that claims to be promoting the world's purest form of Islam, have become bitter rivals over differences in their interpretation of Islam and charges that the Taliban—which controls 90 percent of Afghanistan's territory—has oppressed the Shiite minority in that country.

Antipathy flared into open hostility last month after the Taliban admitted that its soldiers had killed eight Iranian diplomats and an Iranian journalist after conquering Mazar-i-Sharif, a northern stronghold of resistance to the Taliban.

Iran's report of the battle came as a senior UN envoy was leaving Iran for Paki-

stan, where he hoped to meet with Taliban and Pakistani officials to try to defuse the danger of a regional conflict.

By making public the reported clash, one Western observer here speculated, Iran may have hoped to convince UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, Taliban leaders in Afghanistan and their Pakistani friends that a real war is imminent unless the Taliban responds urgently to Iran's demands to end the

After four days of talks with senior Iranian officials in Tehran, Brahimi said he felt more optimistic that "the threats of a regional crisis will lessen," but he saw the accumulation of large numbers of forces from both sides along their mutual border as a potential powder keg.

According to the Iranian news agency IRNA, this week's attack came when Taliban militia struck the Salchabad border post in Iran's Khorasan province with mortar and machine guns. Brig-

ader General Azizollah Jafari, the ground force commander of the Revolutionary Guard, said that Iranian troops fought back for three hours and destroyed three Afghan border posts used by the Taliban, IRNA said. Taliban spokesmen denied an attack took place.

In Washington, a senior State Department official told a Senate hearing that he could not immediately confirm the Iranian report on the clashes. But Karl-Inderfurth, assistant secretary of State for South Asian affairs, said he doubted such an incident would lead to an Iranian incursion.

News of the reported clash between Iran and the Taliban prompted UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to issue an appeal to both sides urging "maximum restraint" to avoid a confrontation. In New York, Annan said through his spokesman's office that there is a new urgency to find a peaceful solution.

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China-Taiwan meeting signals thaw in relations

IN JUNE 1995, the Peking authorities unilaterally suspended cross-strait consultations and launched verbal attacks and military threats against Taiwan, bringing cross-strait relations to a new low. But the ROC's stance has remained consistent. The Taiwan government have since then made 114 public appeals calling on the China to resume communications and consultations as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) has sent four letters to the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), calling for the reumption of normal interaction between personnel of the two intermediary organizations, and clearly stating the ROC's hope for resuming consultations. Our overtures have been based upon the pragmatic view that more room should be reserved for the long-term development of cross-strait relations, rather than withdrawal or a restraint of policy due to temporary changes in the circumstances.

In February 1998, China finally expressed their consent to resume communications and consultations in an official letter to Taipei. Since then the SEF and the ARATS have made considerable progress in improving cross-strait communications and in raising the level of personnel for exchange visits. Most significant, the SEF and the ARATS, in response to the extreme importance attached to this issue by the public, finally agreed and confirmed that SEF Chairman Koo Chen-fu will visit the Chinese main-

land during October 14-19, 1998, and during the course of his trip will meet with ARATS Chairman Wang Daohan. After over three years of cross-strait tensions, this outcome is a beacon of peace, setting people's minds to rest. Considering that the institutionalized system for cross-strait consultations was suspended, this meeting between the top leaders of the SEF and the ARATS holds profound significance for the positive development and interaction of cross-strait relations in the future.

On 7 November 1997, the Taipei-based SEF wrote to the Peking-based ARATS, suggesting that Mr Koo Chen-fu, chairman of the SEF, lead a group of delegates on a visit to the Chinese mainland. This suggestion was based on the pragmatic concern that institutionalized communication and dialogue across the strait can be "gradually" resumed. If formal consultations are resumed at a time when communication seems difficult and hostility across the strait still persists, not only will consultations be fruitless, but the already

fragile mutual trust between Taiwan and the mainland could potentially be further damaged, thus endangering cross-strait relations. It is our sincere hope that through these meetings and the free exchange of opinions between the two chairmen, a good atmosphere conducive to further development across the strait can be created. Chairman Koo's visit to China seeks to establish common ground for the resumption of talks, and also hopes to ease and reduce the antagonism and misunderstanding which has grown over more than three years.

Through our consistent efforts, the Chinese mainland finally was willing to arrange for a meeting between the SEF and the ARATS at the vice chairman and deputy secretary-general levels and to proceed with a meeting of the two chairmen. This is an important step to the gradual resumption of communications and talks between both sides.

We do not exclude the possibility that China is returning to the negotiating table out of a concern for self-interest. However,

it is doubtless that our reasonable and firm stance for mutual relations is the pivotal factor that has brought about this pragmatic response by the mainland. It is our consistent position that the cross-strait consultations should be based upon the fulfillment of mutual agreements, and proceed in an orderly manner, and step by step, within the present system and framework. Judging by the process of correspondence and discussion between the SEF and the ARATS concerning preparations for Chairman Koo's visit, we are pleased that the communication channels have gradually returned to the institutional norm.

At the head of a delegation, Chairman Koo goes to the Chinese mainland for a "visit" and meetings with Chairman Wang Daohan and other people. It is expected that the meeting between Koo and Wang will lead to the resumption of institutionalized communication and dialogue channels.

It is hoped that the Koo-Wang meeting this time will be significant in at least the following respects:

First, the meeting will lay a solid foundation for improving bilateral relations. Through continued communication during the consultation process, mutual understanding can be enhanced and mutual trust accumulated, contributing to the easing of tensions. The Koo-Wang meeting, as well as continued communication and contact between the SEF and the ARATS, will make a significant contribution to improving bilateral relations and to prompting the mandates of these two organizations.

Second, the Koo-Wang meeting sets off a gradual return to the spirit of consultation. The Koo-Wang meeting, and the meetings and consultations convened in advance between the responsible officials and the deputy secretaries-general of the SEF and the ARATS, are largely in accordance with existing agreements and conventions reached by the two sides.

Third, the Koo-Wang meeting demonstrates a resumption of institutionalized cross-strait communication and contact. Although the two sides may have differing opinions on the items to be discussed,

there should be no doubt as to the effectiveness of communication that can be attained through an institutionalized communication channel.

Fourth, this meeting will pave the way for future bilateral consultations. Both the SEF and the ARATS, which are the only government-authorized organizations to conduct cross-strait negotiations, may see this meeting as a natural opportunity to review and implement agreements and consensus reached in the past. This opportunity will further help in paving the way for resuming institutionalized consultations between both sides and for creating favorable conditions for positive interaction.

The vast differences in values as well as political and social systems on Taiwan and the China resulting from nearly 50 years of separate rule, can be bridged when the two sides are given time to build up mutual understanding. Thus, we have, with sincerity, goodwill, and patience, made pragmatic moves to create an environment conducive to harmonious interaction. We hope that Peking will abandon its military intimidation and diplomatic strangulation against Taiwan, and that it will take concrete actions to demonstrate its intention in respecting the present reality of divided rule as well as in improving cross-strait relations. Only then will there be room for the development of comprehensive exchanges and the building of a more solid foundation for cross-strait consultations.

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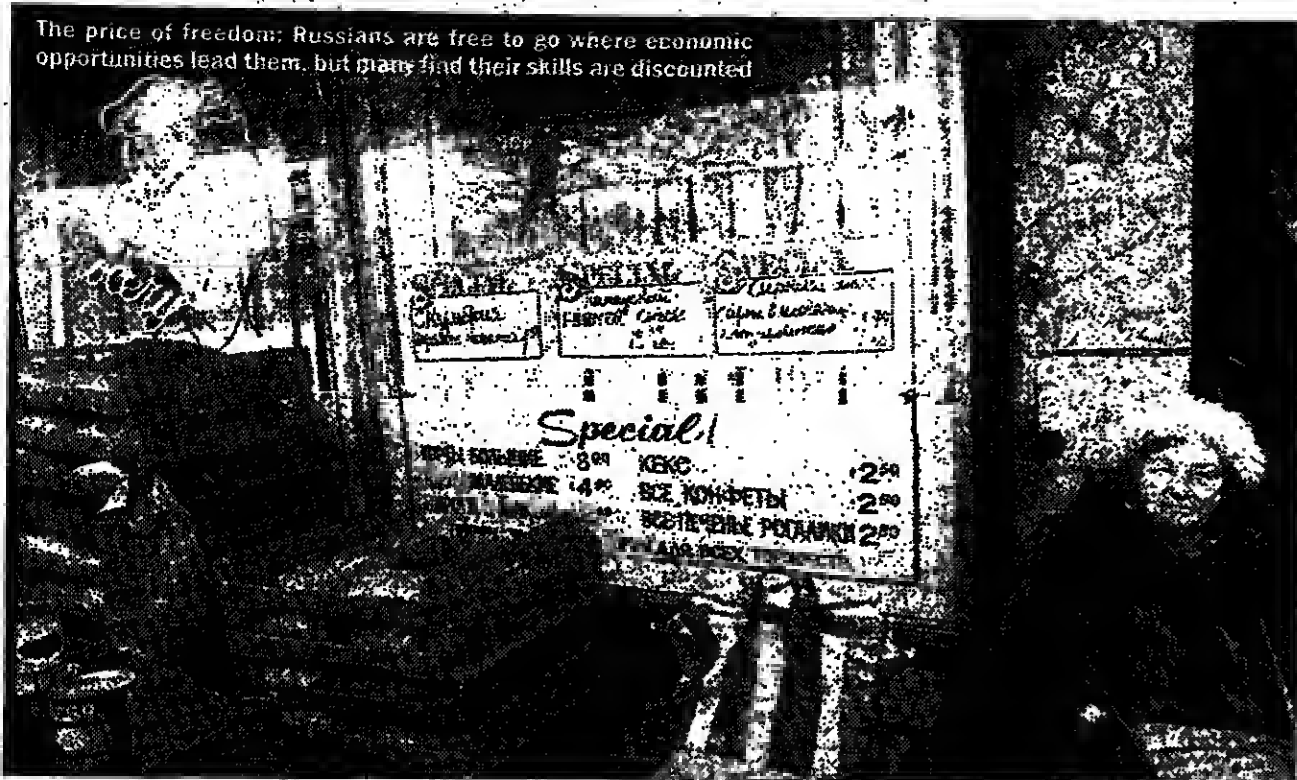
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Things are getting better: let's go!

Global economy programmed for 'economic diasporas,' but there are bugs in the software



► 'A rising tide lifts all boats' is one of the old saws about economic growth. But in today's global economy, the boats lifted by the tide often set sail for other shores. Today's diasporas are increasingly characterized by the movement of people from places, such as India and Latin America, where the economic opportunities are actually improving. One feature of the 'economic diasporas' remains the same, though: nations at the receiving end still balk

Free to sail, the 'philosophers' steamship' stays tied to the dock

Russians watching from home as foreign imaginations take flight

By Alexander Ponomarev

FOR THE RUSSIAN diaspora of the 20th century is akin to diving in a bottomless lake. The issue is so big, so illogical, involves so many people that it defies perspective.

So it should not surprise anyone that there is more than one version of what is going on in Russia today. There is a widely held conviction that a new diaspora is underway, one driven by the pursuit of money and characterized by the removal of vast sums of capital from Russia. But the Russians who are supposed to be emigrating have a different view.

Communism is no more. There is now freedom of movement. Millions of Russians go abroad every year for tourism, business and education. Some stay there.

But most do not stay. Not because there are any political, ideological or moral obstacles any more, at least not on the Russian side. Economic obstacles, however, do not evaporate just because you are free. For Russians abroad, the real issue is simple: how can one earn one's living? Emigration has become an economic problem rather than a political issue.

Some of my acquaintances tried living abroad. There were surprises, some of them far from pleasant. The first one

was the discovery that nobody is overjoyed to welcome you there. And that the business reputation you won in Moscow may not be as valuable in Paris or New York. That your medical degree—and even extensive practical experience—have to be reaffirmed.

Two professors from Moscow State University we know got tired of placing intellect above poverty and accepted an invitation from Germany's Goettingen University. Their saga was adorned with as many thorns as roses. They were utterly unprepared, for instance, to deal with the "greens" who protested against their experiments involving rats and monkeys.

This is not to say that the Westerners who talk about Russia's new diaspora are completely wrong. It is based on a lot of anecdotal evidence—stories of "new Russians" paying cash to purchase jewelry and Mercedes automobiles without blinking an eye, and buying up the Côte d'Azur in France. Such stories, while they are exaggerated, are not totally groundless. Nor are the sensational news

headlines about the "Russian Mafia," which now operates on a global scale. Furthermore, anyone who knows Russia's tortured history might reasonably expect that its people will, given the chance, want to leave.

After all, the Communist regime that called itself the proletarian dictatorship hounded many of its brightest, most talented, most artistic citizens into the embrace of the West. Stalin rewarded those who fought the Germans and were un-

lucky enough to be captured not with freedom, but with a trip to the gulag.

During those 65 years, the concepts of motherland and freedom were incompatible. Motherland or freedom—that was the option given by Communism. As a matter of fact, there was no option. People were treated as a property of the state. The borders were always sealed tight, primarily to keep in the native people. Emigration was equated with high treason. It was quite logical. Like a vacuum, Communism needed a totally sealed off space to survive.

An episode recorded in history as

Economic obstacles, however, do not evaporate just because you are free. For Russians abroad, the real issue is simple: how can one earn one's living?

► TAKE FLIGHT NEXT PAGE

By Uday Pai

IN RECENT YEARS, Indians have been leaving in droves for the US. Unlike many "economic diasporas," this one involves people who can earn a good living in their native country. So what is going on?

When discussing emigration, the usual suspect is India's population, approaching the 1 billion mark at the rate of 43,000 additional people a day. A lack of opportunity, the argument goes, creates an exodus in search of green pastures, the US being one.

That's the old story. Right now, the exodus of Indian software programmers and engineers is demand-driven. The US needs Indian programmers, based on their proficiency in English, good education and understanding of the Western work environment, and its immigration policies reflect this new reality.

At present, India provides the largest number of skilled foreign workers to the US under its special visa program. The key reason for this success is that software is perhaps the only high-technology area that is manpower intensive, and India has a ready pool of well-trained manpower.

According to the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, 44 percent of the H-1B visas (meant for highly skilled workers) are accounted for by Indian software engineers. This quota is described in the media as the "greatest wave of immigration" in recent American history. (China followed with 9 percent, Britain 5 percent and the Philippines and Canada 3 percent each.)

Now the US proposes to raise the number of visas for foreign software professionals. This will benefit India, which has a large pool of highly skilled technical labor. American high-tech companies and their chief executives, including Bill Gates of Microsoft Corporation, have lobbied heavily for the increase in

quota. The US suffers from shortages of qualified employees and companies desperately need skilled foreign workers to help develop new products.

Another sign that this diaspora is a function of demand generated within the global economy is the fact some software émigrés are beginning to

trickle back as the competitive advantage shifts in India's favor. The multinational giants are coming in droves to establish software development, technology or design centers. These include IBM, Microsoft, Adobe, Cadence and

others did anything dramatic like dropping everything and taking the next flight to India. On the contrary, while some made trips here to explore possibilities, others probed safer options such as working out of India for companies in the US.

So far, it is only the "techies" who have chosen to return. And with good reason. Says one analyst: "In the field of computer technology, there isn't much of a gap between India and the US." Besides, advancing technology and the spread of the Internet has made it possible to work from remote locations, there-



Responding to an invitation: Indian "techies" in California

Softplus—all attracted by the much higher cost/benefit ratios of Indian programmers compared to US-born ones.

This recent trend points to a possible reversal of the so-called "brain drain" that has plagued India for decades. The number of returnees is by no means a flood, but it could become one as more and more Indian professionals from California's Silicon Valley find their way back and relocate themselves here as entrepreneurs. True, none

by allowing enterprising techies to come back and work from their home base.

This wave of the Indian diaspora has followed the money to the US. Now it is exercising its freedom to follow it home. ◊

UDAY PAI IS A COCHIN-BASED NOVELIST AND A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT FOR BUSINESS PUBLICATIONS WITH THE DSJ COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.

After two guided decades, another year of living dangerously for the Chinese 'octopus'

By Graham Smith

THE CHAIRMAN of the Economic Ministry of the People's Republic of China, Liang Guohong, is a man of many faces. He is a statesman, a diplomat, a negotiator, a strategist, a tactician, a tactician, a tactician. When the Chinese government is known for its secrecy, he is the one who knows the inside of the government. When the Chinese government is known for its secrecy, he is the one who knows the inside of the government.

"Intersecting financially," he is said to have asked. "Both" replied Liang Guohong, the prime minister of China and one of the most powerful officials in the IMF.

This conversation was taking place in a grand Washington office on Pennsylvania Avenue, but it focused on the far-eastern streets of Jakarta. The conversation was about the both historical and current realities of today's Asia-Pacific. Chinese business distaste is an important dimension, both

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09.10.1998

A group that speaks Spanish but dreams in yen

For Brazil's *dekassegus*, home is where the economic crisis is

By Carlos Castillo

THEY CAME FROM JAPAN in the early years of the 19th century looking for land and hope. Their grandsons and granddaughters reversed direction in the 1970s and 1980s, dreaming of good salaries and job opportunities. Now, the Brazilian *dekassegus* are, under duress, starting a new journey across the Pacific. This time, however, it is a journey without hope or dreams.

REPORTING FROM SAO PAULO

As a result of the first of these journeys, Brazil has the largest Japanese colony in the world. There are approximately 2 million *dekassegus* in Brazil, two-thirds of them in the São Paulo area.

The *dekassegus* are a very special category of the Japanese diaspora. They look like Japanese, have the same family names, share some cultural values. But they are not considered Japanese. That's something they learned when they arrived in their father's and grandfather's native land two decades ago, attracted by the Japanese economic miracle.

Since the late 1970s, it's estimated that 250,000 *dekassegus* returned to Japan, most of whom were younger than 30. Today, they are the third largest foreign community in Japan after the Chinese and Koreans.

They got the jobs they were dreaming of. But they had to work harder than they expected and live under very difficult conditions. They had to endure being treated as second class citizens in the country where, despite

their origins, they are now viewed as surplus people. When the Japanese economy went into recession in 1997, the *dekassegus* were among the first to be hit by the currency crisis.

Speaking Japanese

It's very difficult to distinguish a *dekassegui* from a native Japanese by appearance. But when they open their mouth, the difference becomes clear—they don't speak a word of Japanese. This handicap didn't prevent them from

sending back US\$3.9 billion to their families in 1994. Remittances, however, are dropping dramatically. No more than \$1.5 billion dollars will be transferred this year.

These figures mirror Japan's economic fortunes. In the early 1980s, thousands of Brazilian *dekassegus* were struggling to survive in a country beleaguered by the hyperinflation and recession that hit so many Latin American countries. They were more than receptive to the overtures of Japanese corporations such as Sanyo and Mitsubishi, which were anxious to find a source of cheap labor to meet the demands of a booming economy.

Japanese companies ended up hiring thousands of young *dekassegus* to perform duties that the Japanese workers despised. But a decade later, everything

is different. The Nippon Brazilians now face strong competition from native-born Japanese for even menial jobs.

According to the Japanese Home Affairs Ministry, almost 40,000 Brazilian *dekassegus* have no job security. Approximately 3,500 are already redundant and around 500 are homeless. Their community in Brazil has launched a rescue effort to bring back those who cannot afford the cost of the flight.

Most of the hard hit Brazilian Japanese are in the Aichi region, where the local police have reported more and more cases of food theft and street fights among those out of work. At least four Brazilian *dekassegus* have already been found dead in unclear circumstances.

Many are too proud to come back to Brazil empty handed. Last year, the Brazilian embassy in Tokyo and representatives of a *dekassegui* "Rescue Operation" failed to convince a party of three jobless *dekassegus* living under bridges to accept free tickets on a flight bound to São Paulo. They refused the offer because they couldn't face the fact that their dream of saving yen to start a business in Brazil was over.

Not welcome!

Mauro Akira Kawasaki, 32 years old, came back to Brazil last June, after an uncle promised him a job in São

Paulo. He is very sour about his experience in Japan. He says that in the poor areas of Osaka city, where he lived for four years, it is very common to find warnings at the entrance of restaurants stating that "Brazilians are not welcome." Kawasaki is convinced that he knows the reason why: "The Japanese disdain the *dekassegus* because they still view the first emigrants who went to Brazil as traitors."

Other Brazilian Japanese disagree with this perception, but the fact is that the *dekassegus* have not, whether by choice or necessity, integrated into Japanese society.

Instead, they have created a sort of ghetto inside Japanese society. The city of Oizume, in the province of Gumma, looks as it was located in Brazil and not the periphery of Tokyo. One in 10 of the province's urban residents were born in São Paulo or other Brazilian provinces. Restaurants and shops have Portuguese names such as Ipanema (a famous beach in Rio) or Corinthians (a very popular soccer team in São Paulo).

Now the dream is over and the mood in Oizume and elsewhere has changed radically. The *dekassegus* in Japan are realizing that sooner or later they will have to go back to Brazil, ending a new chapter in the saga of the Japanese diaspora. For them, ironically, Japan became a foreign country and an unfamiliar culture. ☐

CARLOS CASTILLO is a *WorldPaper* ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR LATIN AMERICA.

TAKE FLIGHT

Continued from previous page

"The Philosophers' Steamship" is particularly illustrative of the Bolshevik regime's madness. In the 1920s, on Lenin's personal orders, several dozen of Russia's best minds were crowded into a steamship



and exiled abroad. The move was liberal in its way: later they would have been simply executed. But it put an end to the freedom of thought in the country until the first sprouts of the Gorbachevian *glasnost*.

With this kind of history, it is easy for those outside Russia to imagine a new diaspora and give credence to reports that every year tens of billions of dollars are drained from Russia. The money—much more than the latest IMF credit—is presumed to be dirty, illegal, and stolen from the treasury in one way or another. Even the Russian media and politicians have bought into the story and are debating ways to get that money back, whether with the help of the Interpol or by an amnesty of the capital.

There is no doubt that Russia's *nouveau riche* are exporting their money to ensure they enjoy the good life and don't get crushed by any economic collapses. And getting the truth is still very difficult.

cult after seven decades when ownership of private property was treated as the gravest of crimes, there is still no real legal framework and even less tradition. The state bureaucracy still controls most of the property.

However, two factors make one suspect that the secret export of capital is not as great as reported. First, Russian capitalism is young, aggressive, risk-taking and avaricious,

so annual interest rates of 4 or 5 percent are not good enough for it—inside Russia, its practitioners can make 10 times more. Secondly, the amounts of money allegedly removed would leave footprints through the global economy.

Where are these footprints? ☐

ALEXANDER PUMPIANSKI is *The WorldPaper's* ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR RUSSIA AND EDITOR OF THE MOSCOW-BASED NEWSMAGAZINE *Novoe Vremia*.

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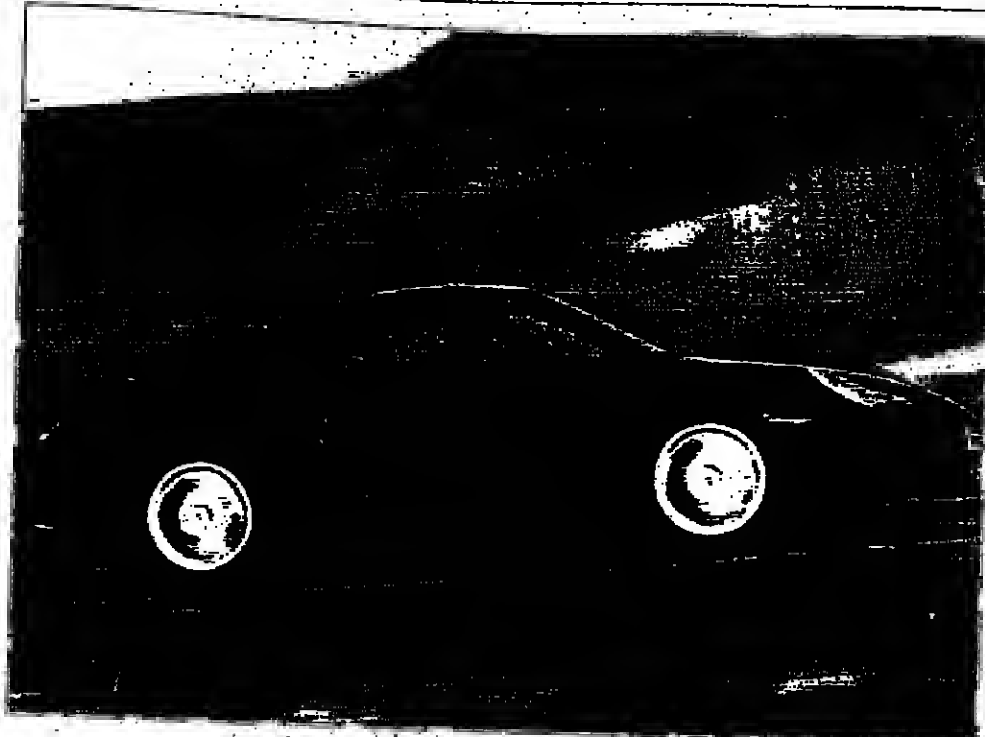
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Porsche announces renewed surge in growth

STUTTGART, Paris—Further growth and another improvement in results for the 1997/98 fiscal year (from August 1 to July 31) were announced recently. Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking, Chairman of the Board of Management at Porsche, said, "Both model lines have contributed equally to this achievement. The new 911 has been an outstanding success worldwide, and demand for the Boxster remains unchanged at a high level."

According to the provisional figures, Group turnover went up by around 20 percent to approximately 4.9 billion German marks. Output of approximately 38,000 vehicles increased by 17 percent compared with the previous year, some 8,000 units-Boxsters only—were made in Finland.

Sales rose by 13 percent to approximately 36,600 vehicles, a slightly lower figure than last year's production owing to the need to fill the

pipeline to importers and subsidiaries during worldwide the 911, Coupe and Cabriolet launches. The Boxster accounted for 18,800 units, the 911 for 17,800—5,000 of them the now discontinued air-cooled version. Profit after tax for the 1997/98 fiscal year rose by an above average amount in relation to turnover (in the previous year, 139.4 million German marks).

The number of Group employees rose by 24 percent to 8,151 (previous year 7,959); the figure for Porsche AG was 7,020 and thus remained almost at the previous year's level.

Porsche's business volume will grow again in the course of the 1998/99 fiscal year, thanks to strong demand for both model lines. Porsche anticipates that turnover for the Group as a whole will exceed 5 billion German marks, with vehicle output and sales both increasing yet again.

At a press conference held

for French journalists in Paris, CEO Dr. Wiedeking also announced that the new sales subsidiary "Porsche France," currently being set up, would start work on January 1, 1999. "In order to expand our market position still further in this country, which is the world's fifth-largest automobile market, we have been discussing the recognition and restructuring of sales and service functions with Sonauto S.A., who have acted as our importers for many years. Selling our sports cars by way of our own subsidiary companies on all major markets is a key element in Porsche's worldwide sales strategy," said Wiedeking.

Porsche already has its own sales subsidiaries in the USA, Great Britain, Japan, Australia, Italy and Spain. Sales in Germany are undertaken directly by Porsche AG. In all other countries, Porsche cooperates solely with importers.

Motor Show opens with diversified collection



Photos by Mahmoud Shawkat



HRH Prince Faisal opens motor show

AMMAN (Star)—The 10th Amman International Motor Show opened Sunday under the auspices of HRH Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein, with the participation of a large number of world famous car companies.

Director of the Amman International Motor Show (AIMS), Mr. Mohammed Kheirullah, referred to this years fair as special, as it coincides with the 10th anniversary of the foundation of AIMS.

Most of the cars on display are 1999 models, with many diversified models and a lot of highly advanced technology in shape, design and machinery. Some cars are being showed for the first time in Jordan.

The seven day annual event contributes greatly to the car market in the Kingdom, and gives those interested a look at the latest models and car technology.

There are 21 Jordanian companies and 27 international car manufacturers participating in this years fair. Moreover, the fair this year is not restricted to just car companies, as among the participants are four companies specializing in spareparts trading, as well as two car rental firms.

Taking part for the first time are six Mercedes car companies, who have arranged their displays in a very attractive manner,

which guarantees to attract the attention of all visitors.

The President of Car Company Owners, Mr. Salamah Al Jundi, responding to a question that there were some companies who had stayed away this year, said that "The expo was held one month early this year, which is the main reason why some companies could not attend. New car models are usually ready for the market from the beginning of June every year, and this means that organizing the expo can only take place in the second half of the year." In a bid to encourage companies to participate in the fair, the show's organizers have allocated prizes for the best display and the most attractive car.

Among the car models on display are Daewoo, Audi, Skoda, Lada, Seat, Ford, Nissan, Daihatsu, Fiat, Hyundai, Opel, Peugeot, and Mercedes, and prices range from JD 6,000 to JD 140,000.

However, it seems that the instability of the Japanese yen and the German Deutschemark has had a knock on effect on car prices in the local market.

Their task is to scare da bears

By Timothy B. Wheeler

GRANTSVILLE, USA—The woods near here are dark and deep, especially at 3:30 in the morning. Then flashlights stab the night, like air-raid beacons. Their beams reveal a pack of hounds howling skyward, pawing the bark of a towering red oak.

High in the tree, a dark patch barely visible in the green, tangle of leaves seems to shift and glisten. It's a black bear, or so it's said.

"You think he's scared, or not?" Calvin Schrock hollers over the din. This is bear hunting, Maryland-style. Schrock, an Amish dairy farmer by day, roams the forests and farm fields of Garrett County at night with family and friends, tracking bears that have ruined crops or killed livestock.

The tired bear, if that's what it really is, led a trio of hounds on a three-hour chase. They dashed pell-mell for miles, across two creeks and a ridge, then came back, until the exhausted creature sought refuge in the oak. The tree is barely 100 yards from the cornfield where the pursuit started.

With bears protected from hunting in Maryland, Schrock and his friends and relatives carry no guns. They aim only to frighten the wild animals from civilization. They do it with the blessing and cooperation of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. State officials hope this form of aversion therapy will ease public pressure to declare open season on the state's largest mammals.

Once nearly wiped out by hunting, bears have rebounded in western Maryland from only about a dozen in the mid-1950s to more than 300 today. Most stick to the forest, feeding on fruits, nuts, plants and insect larvae. But some have become pests—raiding cornfields, rummaging through trash cans and killing pets or farm



A sign posted on a tree next to Deep Creek Lake in Maryland.

animals.

"The way it is now, the bear don't have any fear of you at all," says Delvin Mast, a dairy farmer near Grantsville. He estimates he lost more than \$3,000 worth of corn last year, losses that were only partially reimbursed by the state.

That's where Schrock comes in. DNR calls him whenever it gets a complaint about a bear problem, and he rounds up a crew of men, boys and dogs to go after the wayward animal—and scare it away.

"We just do it for the fun of it," Schrock explains earlier in the evening, adding, "I don't know if it's fun or not after you go every night for a couple weeks."

Schrock, 42, says he learned to hunt bears as a youth from his father, Ern, who sells farm equipment in Oakland. Ern does in the back of a pickup as the hunt wears on. Joel, Calvin's 14-year-old son, rides along, helping keep track of the dogs.

Joining in the hunt are Jason and Ryan Martin, ages 19 and 21. They say their mother

doesn't mind them staying out all night chasing bears "as long as we're home in the morning to help with milking."

Most of the real hunting is done by the dogs: Walker and Plot hounds trained to pursue bears and big cats. Schrock says he has used them to hunt wildcats, bobcats and bears in Colorado, West Virginia and Maine. The dogs wear collars with tiny radio transmitters, so they can be tracked as they race after their quarry. The men fan out on foot and in the trucks, listening for the hounds, checking tracking antenna and communicating by two-way radios.

The men and boys on the hunt this night are Amish or Mennonites, two religious groups that stress family and community and separation from the world. Unlike the horse-and-buggy Amish visible in Lancaster County, Schrock belongs to a church that does not shun all technology.

On this dark night, Mast, the dairy farmer, leads Schrock's band of men and dogs on a fruitless two-hour search of his

600-acre spread after finding a flattened patch of corn. Not wanting to quit, the group drives to a nearby farm, owned by the "Panther Man," a farmer who claims he sees wildcats around his home.

Wildcats aside, he isn't imagining bears, and soon a chase is on. The dogs are relentless, and fearless. As Schrock stands listening by the moonlit cornfield, their baying fades in the distance. They will not give up until their quarry climbs or turns to fight. A few hounds have been badly mauled, and Schrock recounts how one was killed and hauled into a cave. None of the men has been hurt, he says, thanks mainly to the dogs.

After awhile, the baying can be heard again, faintly at first and then louder. Two of the men report a bear, weighing maybe 150 pounds, puffing across the road toward Panther Man's farm, with the dogs barely 50 yards behind.

Schrock and the rest of the band hustle into the woods to where the animal apparently has climbed the oak. With the dogs barking hoarsely, the men decide it is time to give the bear a final scare. They pick up fallen branches from the ground and begin to thump on the tree trunk.

"He's coming down!" one yells, as leaves and bits of bark shower down. The men, who had leashed the dogs in anticipation, begin pulling their packs away.

Suddenly a pair of black paws are reaching around either side of the tree trunk, only about 8 feet from the ground. In a flash, the bear leaps, bowing over one startled photographer, before fleeing into the darkness. She is bruised and shaken, but otherwise unharmed.

"You wanted to see 'em close!" Schrock says, with a laugh.

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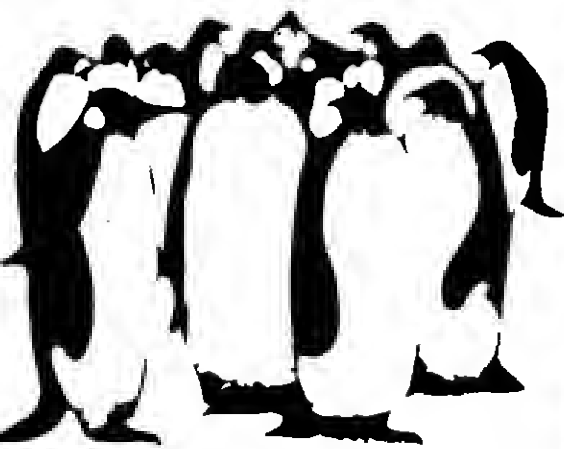
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OFF THE WALL

Pizza talk

By Rana Haddad
Special to The Star

I HOPE this piece of writing will not be misunderstood. I am not a liberal. I am not constantly shouting for the rights of women, and joining demonstrations to make my voice heard. To a great extent, I am satisfied with what women have achieved over the years.

I decided to write this piece after going out for a meal (pizza) with friends from university days. We had not seen each other since graduation, so we had a lot to catch up on. We all started to talk at the same time, and consequently couldn't hear what anyone was saying. So we decided that everyone would have 15 minutes each to speak, uninterrupted, to express their feelings and thoughts.

Some of the items discussed made me laugh, but two in particular made me initially very sad, then angry. I thought it was necessary to share our intimate thoughts with you, as a way of venting the anger if you like.

The first topic which hurt me, was related to the problems faced by women on public transport. None of us at the restaurant owned cars, so we all knew what one of my friends was talking about. She has got so fed up with men feeling her hair on the bus, that she now covers her head with a scarf.

We all related to this experience, to such an extent that we will now go out of our way not to catch a bus. The problem does not stop there, as many of us have been "stopped" by male taxi and car drivers, who have offered free rides if we so wanted! The harassment does not stop there. Another friend said that she is often mistaken for Alboor, or Samirah, by men waiting at the bus stops. They claim that it was mistaken identity, but really it is their way of starting a conversation.

The other issue that hurt me was the subject of arranged marriages. One girl had remained silent for a long while, but when it was her time to speak, she soon became very angry. "Is it right that a man, along with his family, can enter into my house looking for a bride. Am I like a dress on display in the shop window. Must I sit there whilst he checks me over, before deciding whether or not he wants to 'purchase' me. No, I am a human being with feelings!" she said angrily.

The restaurant had gone quite now, and heads had been turned. The ice was broken when we all burst into laughter, simultaneously, at the absurdity of the thought that things will change.

All of us agreed that our pride was at issue, and that we were offended when men treated us in the above mentioned ways. We all asked to be treated with respect, and a little courtesy. Then we returned to our pizzas, which for reasons known to all of us, tasted so much better.

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

UNLIKE MANY contemporary calligraphers, Nasser Mansour is able to free himself from the mundane trivialities and the other more common calligraphic styles. He creates his own language, and avoids overwhelming approaches and pitiful imitations, and the tone of his work is shaped by his spiritual inclination.

What he is unable to capture as a mortal, his pen, ink and paper make up for it. His exhibition 'Ahl Al Bayt' at Jordan's National Gallery of Fine Arts, demonstrates his ability to employ different styles and forms.

Mansour uses various calligraphic scripts and he applies some of the best known traditional Arabic styles, including Kufic, Thuluth, Jali Diwani and others. Although 'Ahl Al Bayt' is his first solo exhibition, it has taken him four and half years to complete.

The 31 calligraphic pieces on display are quite exceptional, in that they deal with one theme through different script

forms, structures and artistic expressions. They seek to expose the spiritual purity and significance of the subject.

"In these works I have attempted to unite visual forms in a new and creative way," he says. Since his childhood, Mansour became attracted by Arabic calligraphy, and the spirituality and the teachings of Ahl Al Bayt, the descendants of the holy prophet. "I have tried to express, through this exhibition, the rich artistic heritage of Arabic calligraphy, and to pay tribute to Ahl Al Bayt," he says.

His 31 pieces are produced on paper, by himself and/or his teacher, Hassan Calabi, the well-known Turkish calligrapher. Many of the pieces are embellished with foliated Arabesque designs in gouache and water colors, or illuminated in gold leaf. Some are left in their pure state, with only the lines to show their inherent beauty.

Hadith Al Sharif, exhibit No. 6, is ink and acrylic on paper in the Kufic Quranic style, that dates back to 1418 AH. Exhibit No. 11, is of another Hadith Al Sharif, also acrylic on paper that per-

Nasser Mansour

A tribute to Ahl Al Bayt



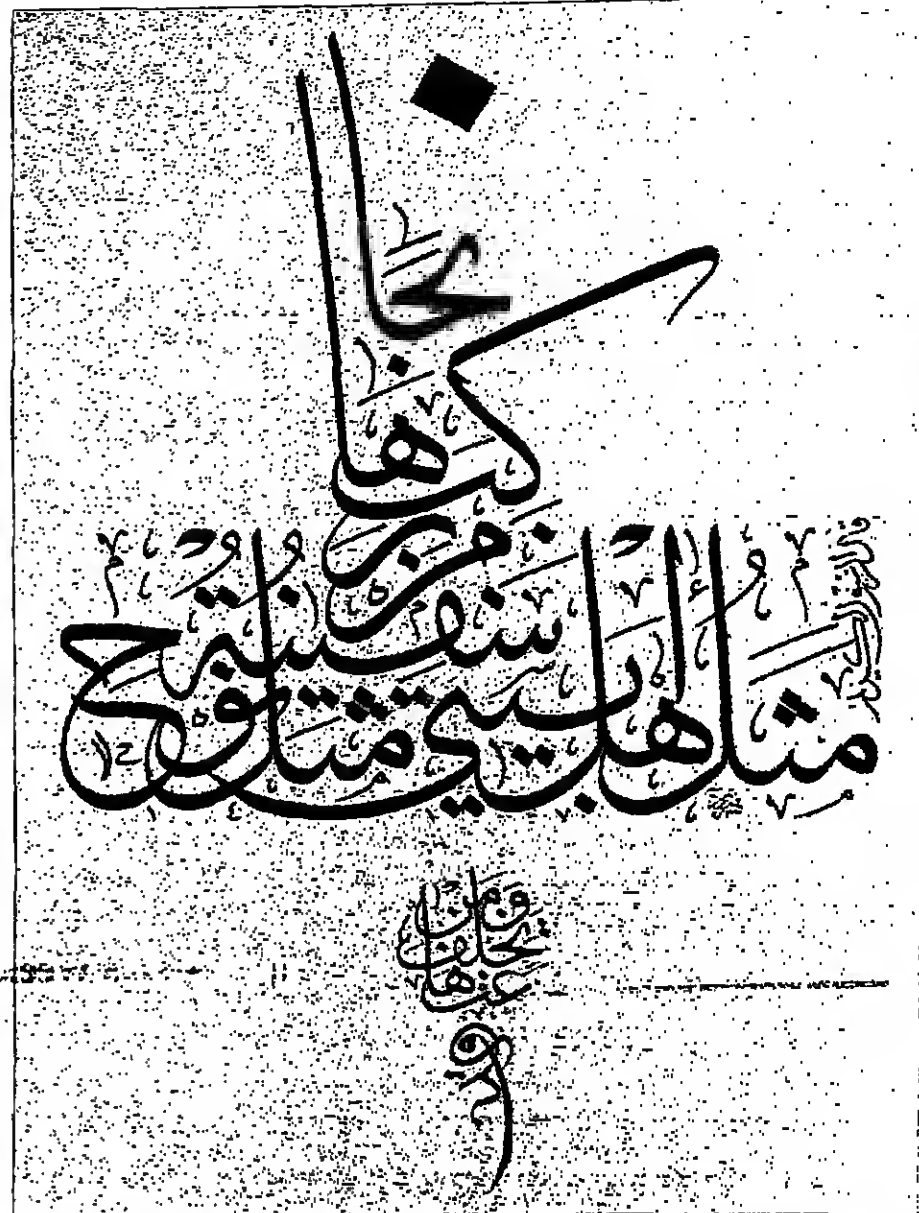
tains to the Thuluth Jali style. Another outstanding piece in the exhibition is Al Salat Al Ibrahimiyah. Dating back to 1417 AH, it is of the Quranic Kufic style.

While he shows his brilliance with these extraordinary Quranic inscriptions, Mansour shows his versatility in piece No. 26. He presents Farazdaq's poetry using ink and acrylic on paper.

Mansour uses ordinary lines in a complex way and avoids the usual calligraphic dots. This is seen in piece No. 2, a Quranic verse in Jali Diwani style, where he has applied ink that is gouached on acrylic paper to confirm his artistic might. His illustrations of the Quran, a tribute to Ahl Al Bayt are a fascinating interpretation of the classic texts.

Born in 1967, Mansour graduated in 1988 from the University of Jordan with BA in Islamic jurisprudence. Later, he got his MA in Islamic Art from Al Bayt University. He is a founding member of the Society of Arabic Calligraphers, member of the Federation of Jordanian Plastic Artists, member of the Iraqi Calligraphers Society and of the Union of Jordanian Writers, as well as being an honorary member of the Iranian Calligraphers Society in Tehran.

He has participated in the Comprehensive Exhibition of the Art of Arabic Calligraphy at the University of Jordan, all three festivals of Arabic Calligraphy in Baghdad, Al Quds Exhibition at Orphali Gallery, and the fourth annual exhibition of Arabic calligraphy in Cairo. He has also taken part in a workshop in the art of calligraphy, held in Tokyo.



Besides his academic qualifications, Mansour has undergone several artistic training courses to develop his natural talent. He was forged on the anvil of the genius Hikmat Baradci, whilst in Istanbul receiving instructions in calligraphy from Hassan Calabi. Today Mansour is an instructor of calligraphy at the College of Educational Science, at the University of Jordan.

Among his personal successes are the designing of the new banknotes and coins of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the emblem for the Al Bayt University in Jordan. He also carried out the Arabic calligraphy and Islamic decoration on the rebuilding project for the 'Salah Al Din Minhar', which was executed by 'Mihrah', a group of Islamic Architects in Amman.

Mansour is a young talented Jordanian artist who never compromises or allows himself to be manipulated by other calligraphers. The exhibition will end on 23 October.

Portuguese novelist wins Nobel amidst controversy

By Richard Boudreaux

PORTUGUESE FABULIST Jose Saramago, whose entrancing tales and playful skepticism about history and reality made him one of Europe's most original contemporary writers, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature last week.

The 75-year-old author rose from obscurity late in life to become the grand old man of Portuguese letters. Saramago is the first writer in Portuguese, the language of 140 million people around the world, to win the prize.

Saramago's 19 novels, four plays and three volumes of poetry, form an iconoclastic body of literature that champions the common man and challenges conventional views on religion and the goal of a united Europe.

The Swedish Academy said it chose Saramago, a contender for several years, because his work, "sustained by imagination, compassion and irony, continually enables us to apprehend an elusive reality."

"He invokes tradition in a way that in the current state of things can be described as radical," the academy's citation said.

The author, a slight, modest man who looks more like an elderly clerk than a literary giant, heard the news in Frankfurt on his way to the airport from the German city's book fair. Instead of flying home to Spain's Canary Islands, he returned to the fair and addressed an applauding crowd.

"It's like being hit on the head, but not hard enough to make you fall down," he said of the \$978,000 prize.

"You carry on walking around and wait to come back to your senses."

"The prize is for all speakers of Portuguese," he added, "but while we're on the subject, if you don't mind, I shall keep the money."

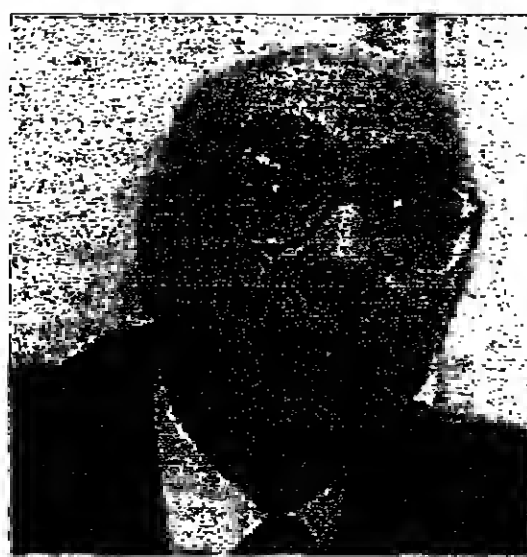
Saramago first earned international acclaim in 1982 with *Baltasar and Blimunda*. The novel is a blasphemous and humorous story about two lovers in 18th century Portugal trying to escape the Inquisition in a flying machine.

His most acclaimed work, *The Stone Raft*, traces the Iberian peninsula as it breaks off from Europe and drifts into the Atlantic. In magical realist style laced with political satire, it describes the epic journey of three men and two women coping with separation from the continent and seeking their true selves.

Saramago left Portugal in protest after its government, under pressure from the Roman Catholic Church, vetoed *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, his reworking of the New Testament, as an entry for the 1991 European Literary Prize.

Among other provocations, the novel challenges the immaculate conception, and depicts religion founded on pain, death and intolerance.

The Vatican criticized the academy's "ideological recognition" of Saramago, an agnostic and longtime member of Portugal's unrepentant Communist Party. *L'Osservatore*



Saramago

Romano, the Vatican newspaper, said his novel is "testimony of a substantial anti-religious sentiment."

However, Portuguese leaders joined in the near-universal applause for the winner.

"Finally, justice has been done to Portuguese literature," said Mario Soares, who was president when Saramago left the country. Current President Jorge Sampaio said: "Jose Saramago is a universal writer, a great artist and a great creator."

Saramago is the fourth consecutive European to win the literature prize, one of five established by Alfred

Nobel, the Swedish industrialist and inventor of dynamite. Prizes for literature, chemistry, physics, medicine and peace have been awarded since 1901. A sixth prize, in economics, was started in 1969.

While Saramago voices reservations about joining "the club of rich countries," he has made peace with Portugal's leaders. He and his Spanish wife return several times a year to an apartment they keep in Lisbon, the Portuguese capital.

Saramago, the son of poor farmers, left high school to work as a locksmith. His first novel, *Country of Sin*, published in 1947, told of peasants in moral crisis.

Like 20th century Portugal, Saramago was a late bloomer. Working as a translator and a journalist, he wrote little fiction until after the 41-year rightist dictatorship of Antonio Oliveira de Salazar ended in 1974. *Rising Earth*, his tale of a poor people's revolt, won Lisbon's top literary prize in 1980, launching his career as a best-selling author at age 58.

"He is remarkable for being utterly and indelibly Portuguese," *Los Angeles Times* book critic Richard Eder wrote last year. "Centuries of fog, decline and melancholy. How could a great Portuguese writer, in this doleful trio of national conditions, do anything but flower into skepticism? The flowering in this desert or marsh—is brilliant: fantasy, humor and a need to read the world's messages backward for what they conceal."

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ Paintings by 18 artists from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon at the Al Mashriq Gallery, Shmesani. It continues until 1 November.

■ Under the patronage of HM Queen Noor, the Cervantes Institute is showing an exhibition entitled Goya's Caprichos. The exhibition was opened on the 13 October, and will run until 23 October.

■ An exhibition by Lamia Jamal at the French Cultural Center runs until 26 October.

Films

■ A film entitled Goya: El capricho y la invencion, will be shown at the Instituto Cervantes on the 18 October, at 6:30 pm. The film is a documentary giving a good combination of Goya's works, and etchings. It will be shown in Spanish, with a commentary by Dr Khalid Khreis.

■ A French film, entitled *Prénom*

Carmen will be showing at the French Cultural Center on the 19 October, at 6:30 and 8:30 pm. The film, from 1983, is about a young girl who manages her own business.

■ The American Center will be showing Quiz Show (starring Robert Redford) on 15 October, at 5:00pm.

■ The British Council will be showing Bounty on 20 October, at 6:00pm. The movie is headlined by Mel Gibson and Anthony Hopkins.

■ A 1995 German movie, entitled Lisbon Story, will be showing at the Goethe Institute on 21 October at 7 pm.

Workshop

■ The British Council is currently holding a number of workshops, discussing Modern English Literature. On the 19 October, the *The Inscrutable Orientals-The Far East*, will be reviewed at the auditorium from 5:00 until 7:00 pm.

The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 17-24 October.

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animaniacs (Cartoon)
3:30—Clowning Around
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Peer Pressure (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog.
6:00—Wind at my back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Murphy Brown
8:00—Sirens
9:15—ABC of Democracy
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Lyddie
12:00—Twisted

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:30—Pumpkin Patch
3:50—The Adventures of the Black Stallion
4:00—Discover The Wild Animals
4:30—Vid Kids
5:00—NBA
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—The Brittas Empire
8:00—French Program
8:30—Renegade
9:05—Farming & Ecology
9:30—Behind the Scene
10:00—News in English
10:30—Veronica Clare
11:30—Doozie Howser

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Batman (Cartoon)
3:30—The Gentle from Down Under (Drama)
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Last Frontiers (Doc.)
5:00—French Program
6:00—Wind At My Back



The Internet Cafe, Sunday at 4:00 pm.

7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Parenthood
8:00—The Internet Cafe
8:30—Big Sky
9:10—Encounter
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Veronica Clare

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—French Cartoon
3:30—Bananas in Pyjamas
4:00—Life Choices (Doc.)
4:30—Small Talk
5:00—The Lions Kingdom

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): Kull The Conqueror
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Last Man Standing
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): 6 Days 7 Nights
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Nasser (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Up Close & Personal

3:30—Halfway Across The Galaxy & Turn Left
4:30—Masters Of The Maze
5:00—French Program
6:15—Wind At My Back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Two Point Children
8:00—Envoy Special
8:30—Kung-Fu
9:10—Great Moments Of Science & Technology
9:30—Faces & Places
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Chicago Hope
12:00—Bugs (Drama)

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Superman (Cartoon)
3:30—Sliders (Drama)
4:00—Life On The Digital Edge
5:00—French Program
6:15—Sparks
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Family Matters
8:00—Great Romances of the 20th Century
8:30—Dr Quinn Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film: True Crime
12:00—The Boys (Comedy)

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Swiss Family Robinson
3:30—Treasure Hunt
4:00—French Film
6:15—The Simpsons
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Fresh Prince of Bel Air

8:00—Cinema. Cinema
8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Everyman
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The X Files (Drama)
11:10—The Halifax

PROGRAMMES EN FRAN AIS

SAMEDI

17:00—Fant pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Thalassie
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI

18:00—Les cours brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6
20:00—Envoyé spécial

JEUDI

16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

VENDREDI

18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Alô la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV



TITANIC: Nothing on earth can rival the epic spectacle and breathtaking grandeur of *Titanic*, the sweeping love story that sailed into the hearts of moviegoers around the world, ultimately emerging as the most popular motion picture of all time. Leonardo DiCaprio and Oscar-nominee Kate Winslet light up the screen as Jack and Rose, the young lovers who find one another on the maiden voyage of the 'unsinkable' R.M.S. *Titanic*. But when the doomed luxury liner collides with an iceberg in the frigid North Atlantic, their passionate love affair becomes a thrilling race for survival. From acclaimed filmmaker James Cameron comes a tale of forbidden love and courage in the face of disaster, that triumphs as a true cinematic masterpiece.

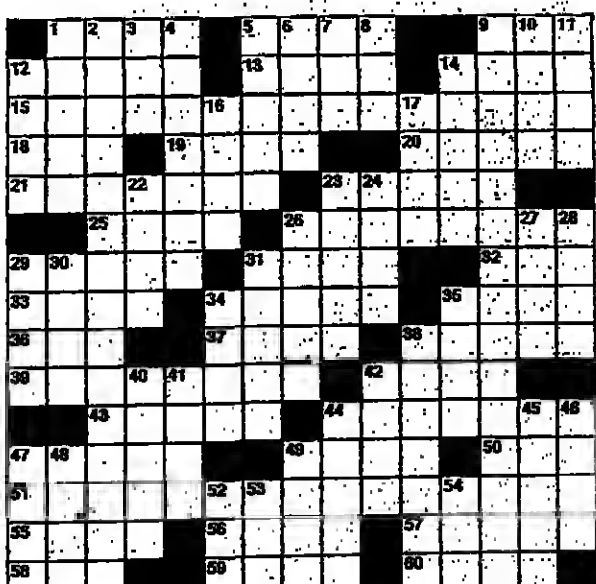


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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS
- 1 Its downhill from here
 - 5 Hookish
 - 9 "My country of these"
 - 12 Curious one
 - 13 Ganga ses, vice, for sport
 - 14 Ido
 - 15 Security device
 - 18 Application
 - 19 Dears
 - 20 Lame
 - 21 Roundabout ways
 - 23 Rigging supports
 - 25 Gumbo
 - 26 Police action
 - 28 Champions
 - 31 In that case
 - 32 Ziegfeld
 - 33 Sound of laughter
 - 34 Went slowly
- DOWN
- 1 Win by
 - 2 Be a hero
 - 3 Crowd
 - 4 Discriminating
 - 5 Shortcomings
 - 6 On the (lighting)
 - 7 Sash
 - 9 Deliberate
 - 10 Durocher
 - 11 Job essen-tials
 - 12 Partisan
 - 13 Hector Hugh Munro
 - 14 Run swiftly
 - 15 Strident noise
 - 16 Isen chas-cio-ter
 - 17 A state: abbc
 - 18 Another state: abbc
 - 23 Stages
 - 24 Bewine in gaps
 - 26 Sleep
 - 27 Bator
 - 28 Playthings
 - 29 "The Mouse Roared"
 - 30 Stage villain
 - 31 Musical groups
 - 32 Naval rank: abbc
 - 35 Compositions for one
 - 36 Sektor
 - 40 Act badly
 - 41 Japanese people
 - 42 Plant pouches
 - 44 Cog
 - 45 Melodramatic
 - 46 Old name for Tokyo
 - 47 Lines
 - 48 Small brook
 - 49 Roasting rod
 - 52 Knock
 - 53 Shaded judge
 - 54 Pool item

This Week's HOROSCOPES

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's in Libra going into Scorpio. Watch your Libra friends. They'll be cute and flirtatious and creative.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Surrender to your partner's whims. Be careful. Take control of the checkbook and of your impulses, or you'll go way over budget.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Get a work-related question answered so you can make your big decision. You'll be ready to choose. Wait for the right moment, and the best offer.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Romance definitely blossoms. You may not get much else done. That's OK, because these are intense workdays.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Whip your place into shape and don't waste a moment. Romance is in the air big time. No telling what will happen and when, so be ready.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Acquire the skills you need for a job. It's a great time to fix-up your place even if it means tossing some stuff out.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Insider information could lead to an excellent deal, so pay attention. Focus on learning new skills and attack a difficult project.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're irresistible. Plan your time accordingly. Focus on money. You'll get it by talking, and there's plenty there. The rest of your attention shifts from yourself to your pocketbook.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Succumb to the pressure. It's pointless to resist. Once you do that, you'll find yourself getting stronger, a feeling that increases.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Let friends entice you to go play. You'll be sorry but that's OK. You would have had to work late anyway.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Show an older person respect and you'll be repaid with love. You should have your objective in mind and know what needs to be done next.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Go as far as you can and back again. Work on a deal to improve your career and make the commitment.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Money wants to come to you, so give it a nudge in that direction. Work interferes with travel plans, unless you find a way to do both.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Your Scorpio side comes out this year, helping you be more decisive. You'll also be good at planning.

© 1998, Tribune Media Services

PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOWNK
GUCOH
NAHDE
TARIPE

Answer: IN THE 

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: IN THE

Answer: KNOW COUGH HANDED PRIVATE

Words of Wisdom

Strong leaders need strong associates.

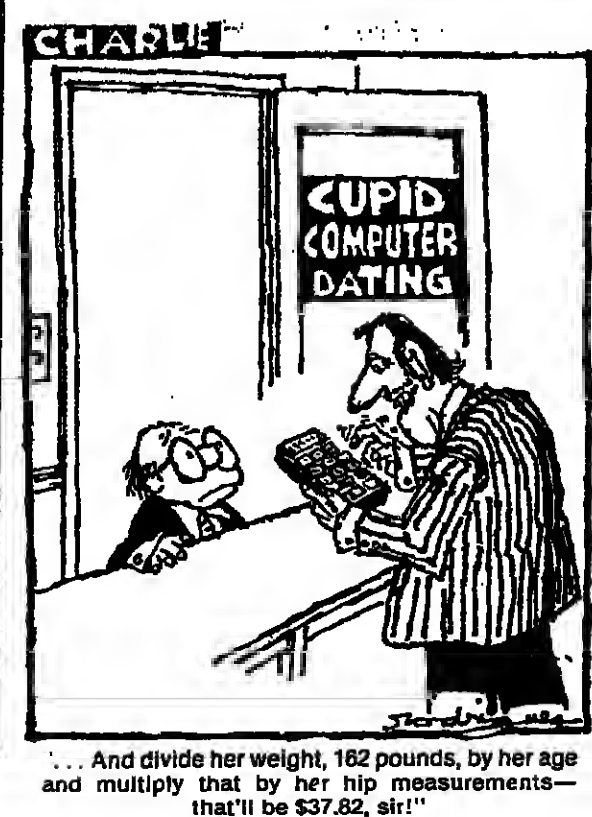
Workers who spend time sniping at co-workers and bosses often feel powerless in their ability to change things.

Luck seems to blossom in proportion to work: the harder you work, the luckier you get.

We may expect politicians to lie, but we want the lies at least to be convincing ones.

If you don't use power, you will lose power.

Why are people more willing to believe something whispered than something stated out loud?



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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Addasi

Pan-Arab Games update

Al Sa'ad confident that Jordan is ready



Mr Al Sa'ad

AMMAN (Star)—The Arab Sports Federation (ASF) Secretary General, Othman Al Sa'ad, confirmed the he is confident that Jordan would host an efficient and successful Pan Arab Games, based on the level of experience and ability the Kingdom has in holding major sporting events.

During his visit to the Kingdom last week, Mr Al Sa'ad toured some sports facilities in Amman and Irbid, and expressed his satisfaction regarding the preparations for the Pan Arab Games.

At the end of his tour, Mr Al Sa'ad held a press conference, urging both Iraq and Kuwait to forget their past animosities, and participate together in the games.

He also said that the Arab Sports Federation would assist the Jordanian preparations financially, by reducing their profit margins on promotion and television coverage by 50 percent, which equates to about \$1 million.

Mr Al Sa'ad announced the formation of the ASF Supervisory Committee, to be headed by Games director Isam Aridat. The committee will oversee all the preparations for the next Pan Arab Games. He also



Inspecting a Jordanian sports facility

urged journalists to modernize their equipment, and improve their coverage of sports events, by introducing computers and the internet service.

Badminton teams heads to Cyprus

AMMAN (Star)—The Jordanian men and women badminton teams will leave for Cyprus next week to participate

in an international tournament to be held in Nicosia from 22 to 25 October. Each squad will consist of eight players, and success is expected from Lina Al Rushdan and Montaser Al Nobani in particular.

Fencing teams get Chinese coach

AMMAN (Star)—Mr Wang Foji, from China, is the new coach for the Jordanian men and women's fencing teams. The appointment comes after both teams performed dismally during the recent Arab championship held in Kuwait. The new coach will be on a pay package of \$700 a month, plus his living expenses. The only suc-

cess in the championship was a bronze medal in Sheeh's competition for men.

Amer Al Natour, Bilal Al Rahal and Jaser Khader, are expected to do well, given some inspired coaching.

Jordan Weight-lifting team takes 4th place



Amer Al Natour

AMMAN (The Star)—Jordan's weight-lifting team came runners-up in an international tournament held in Turkey last week. In all, there were 11 countries participating. Jordan obtained two silver medals, won by Ahmad Abu Ja'far (69 Kg division) and Mohammed Al Tayem (105 kg division).

The final table standings were as follows: 1- Turkey, 2- Saudi Arabia, 3- Azerbaijan, 4-Jordan, 5- Kazakhstan, 6- Syria, 7- Iraq, 8- Bulgaria, 9-Holland, 10-Cuba, 11- Uzbekistan.

Men's Handball team abstains

AMMAN (Star)—The Jordanian Handball Federation decided not to send a team to the next Asian Games to be held in Bangkok. The decision was based on the poor performance of the team during the last Arab championship, held in Egypt. Jordan finished in 9th place, out of the 11 countries who participated.



Mohannad Al Mansi in action for Jordan

Sheikh Al Maktoum wins Endurance Race

WADI RUM—Sheikh General Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Minister of Defense, scored oother major international victory when he won the 120-kilometer Emirates International Endurance Horse Race, held in Wadi Rum on Friday.

Sheikh Mohammed finished first with a time of 7:26:45 hours on his horse Zahrat Al Waadi, and was presented with a Land Rover for his efforts.

The runner-up was Saeed Abdullah Humaid, also from the UAE, on his horse, Tano. Humaid finished the race in a time of 7:26:47 hours, and was presented with a Nissan Patrol. In third place was Tareq Al Taher, from Saudi Arabia, on Pajero, with a time of 7:27:10 hours, collecting a purse of Db 100,000.

Sheikh Mohammed, who is the captain of the formidable UAE endurance racing team, led from the front and was in control for most of the gruelling race, which was witnessed by many lovers of the sport.

The best placed Jordanians were Nasser Al Tarabeen on his mount Noor Al Salam, who came in fourth position, with a time of 7:45:40 hours, picking up Db 90,000. In fifth place was Mohammed Abu Amara, riding his horse Abu Mizar.

The UAE team performance have boosted their morale, and Sheikh Mohammed must be a strong contender to win the World Endurance Championship, scheduled to be held in the UAE later this year.

The Dubai Crown Prince donated his trophy and all the cash prizes won by the UAE horsemen to charities in Jordan.

He asked Princess Alia, bint Hussein, head of the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation—who attended the prize giving ceremony—to distribute the cash to charitable organizations in



Sheikh Al Maktoum (center) riding to victory in the Endurance Race

Jordan.

The prize was handed over to Sheikh Mohammed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Civil Aviation Department and head of Emirates Airline.

A total of Dh 1 million was distributed to 18 riders, all of whom completed the race. The Emirates Power and Endurance Race, which runs for the fourth year, is the third richest in the world, after the American and the UAE races. The top two riders of the race qualified for the world championships, to be held in the UAE in December. ■



HRH Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein presenting the trophy to Sheikh Al Maktoum

The fight is on for Euro 2000 qualification



Action from the Switzerland-Italy match

Euro 2000 summary
England's hopes of reaching the Euro 2000 finals took a severe blow on Saturday when they could only manage a goalless draw with Bulgaria at Wembley Stadium. Meanwhile, Germany slumped 1-0 to Turkey in their opening match, whilst world champions France, desperate to bury the embarrassment of last month's draw in Iceland, gave new coach Roger Lemerre just the tonic he needed, with a 3-2 win in Russia—his first win since succeeding Aimé Jacquet in July. Italy leads the way in Group 1, after Alessandro Del Piero silenced his critics with both goals in a 2-0 win over Switzerland, ending a five-month goal drought which many saw as the deciding factor in the Italians poor World Cup campaign.

England (0) Bulgaria (0)

Glenn Hoddle's future as England coach now hangs in the balance as Saturday's bitterly disappointing stalemate, coupled with an opening defeat to Sweden, means his side's hopes of qualifying for the finals have been severely compromised.

It was only 12 months ago to the day, that Hoddle was celebrating after another goalless draw, in Italy, which secured World Cup qualification for France 98.

However, the latest performance by England threatens to leave them adrift in a sea of mediocrity, having failed to see off a side comprehensively beaten 3-0 at home by Poland only four weeks ago.

Poland swept to the head of the group after squashing Luxembourg 3-0 in Warsaw. Sweden had a night off. England, who play Luxembourg next, were booed off at Wembley after failing to carve out any real openings, save for a Michael Owen

shot over the bar and a Sol Campbell header which went just wide.

The Bulgarians, who had lost their last four encounters against England, were nearly suspended from the competition last month after a dispute between the national federation and the Sofia government. After Satur-

day's miserable showing, England will wish it had been.

Skipper Alan Shearer summed up England's frustration. "We must go on, and we must take three points against Luxembourg," said the Newcastle striker. "We know that we're a good side, but over the last two games we haven't proved that. You don't become a bad side overnight."

Hoddle admitted that England now faces an uphill task to qualify for the finals. "At the end of the day, you don't have to be a genius to work out that we have to quickly get back to winning ways," said the England coach.

"We have to pick ourselves up for Wednesday's match against Luxembourg and hope that the result of Sweden's match against Poland goes our way."

British bookmakers quickly cut the odds on Hoddle losing his job by the end of the season from 6-4 to 4-5.

Turkey (1) Germany (0)

Germany had an even bigger shock as they lost their Group 3 clash with Turkey.

Galatasaray striker Hakan Sukur, nicknamed the Bull of the Bosphorus, headed the only goal to beat the three-time world champions, who were playing their first match under new coach Erich Ribbeck.

Sukur struck with 20 minutes to go in the match, after German keeper Oliver Kahn failed to clear a loose ball. Turkey's Tayfun Korkut was sent off seconds later for a second bookable offense, but the visitors were unable to exploit their extra man.

Turkey's triumph leaves them top of the group, with a maximum six points from two games, while Germany—the defending European champions—travels to Moldova for its second qualifier next Wednesday.

Scotland (3) Estonia (2)

In Group 9, Scotland needed two goals from substitute Billy Dodds on his international debut to scrape a 3-2 win over Estonia at Tynecastle.

The Scots were staring defeat in the face when Maksim Smirnov put the Baltic minnows 2-1 up with just 14 minutes to go.

However, an own goal two minutes later by Sergei Hoblov-Simson, the scorer of Estonia's first goal, let the Scots back into the match.

Estonia's Marko Kristal was then sent off in the 82nd minute following a collision with Callum Davidson and Dundee United striker Dodds, who had scored the Scots' first goal, hit the late winner.

FULL RESULTS

- Group 1
- Italy (2) Switzerland (0)
- Denmark (1) Wales (2)
- Group 2
- Latvia (1) Georgia (0)
- Slovenia (1) Norway (2)
- Group 3
- Northern Ireland (1) Finland (0)
- Turkey (1) Germany (0)
- Group 4
- Armenia (0) Iceland (0)
- Andorra (0) Ukraine (2)
- Russia (2) France (3)
- Group 5
- England (0) Bulgaria (0)
- Poland (3) Luxembourg (0)
- Group 6
- Cyprus (0) Austria (3)
- San Marino (0) Israel (5)
- Group 7
- Azerbaijan (0) Hungary (4)
- Liechtenstein (0) Slovakia (4)
- Portugal (0) Romania (1)
- Group 8
- Malta (1) Croatia (4)
- Group 9
- Scotland (3) Estonia (2)
- Bosnia (1) Czech Republic (3)
- Lithuania (0) Faroe Islands (0)

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Portugal on there way to a 0-1 defeat at the hands of Romania

Cinéma

Prénom Carmen, film de Jean-Luc Godard (1983), couleur, sous-titré en arabe, avec M. Detmers et J. Bonnafé. Son oncle metteur en scène étant hospitalisé. Carmen lui demande si elle peut utiliser son appartement pour tourner un film. Séances au Centre culturel français le lundi 19 octobre à 18h30 et 20h30.

Les sculptures filiformes de Lamia Jamal au CCF jusqu'an 26 octobre.

assécher le lac et à le transformer en parc est en effet en cours. Déjà, certaines parcelles de terrains ont été asséchées et des arbres ont été plantés. Mais, il y a trois ans, un projet d'assainissement du même type avait échoué, et peu après son premier assèchement, le lac Zarqa était revenu, identique à lui-même.

Mais le problème ne se limite pas à un désastre écologique. « Les chômeurs se regroupent autour du loc. remarque une jeune femme, et on retrouve nombre de

est aggravé par les émanations du lac». Quant aux médecins de la région, ils notent de

A black and white photograph showing a dense urban area, likely a city, viewed from a distance across a body of water. The city is built on a hillside, with numerous buildings and structures visible. The foreground is dark and appears to be a body of water or a heavily shaded area.

«À première vue, poursuit la riveraine, le lac ne paraît pas très profond, mais une fois qu'on est tombé dedans, ses eaux boueuses vous aspirent et il est impossible d'en sortir». Une riveraine.

Reportage au coeur d'un marigot.

converte d'algues, l'eau du lac Zarqa n'inspire guère confiance. Avec une superficie de 80000 mètres carrés, et une moyenne de 20 mètres de profondeur, le lac Zarqa est le principal réservoir du barrage King Talal. Mais il est également le dépotoir privilégié de nombre d'industries de la région de Ruseifeh. Ainsi,

depuis les années soixante, les sédiments rejetés par la Compagnie jordanienne des phosphates bloquent partiellement l'écoulement des eaux du fleuve Zarqa, interdisant le bon renouvellement des eaux du lac, les condamnant à croupir. Et les trente ans de rejet de matières plastiques, de phosphates et d'argile n'ont partiellement cessé qu'en 1990. Mais l'enneigement hivernal, qui empêche

Le « lac Pepsi », c'est ainsi que les riverains surnomment le lac Zarga, en référence à la responsabilité de l'industriel dans la catastrophe écologique qui frappe la région. A la seule mention de la boisson gazeuse, les visages se durcissent et

contractant. « Nous avons peur pour nos enfants, se plaint une habitante des pourtours du lac, nous devons leur interdire de jouer de peur qu'ils ne se noient. » Selon l'Association jordanienne pour l'environnement, trois à quatre personnes se noient chaque année dans le « lac Pepsi ». « À première vue, poursuit la riveraine, le lac ne paraît pas très profond, mais une fois qu'on est tombé dedans, ses eaux boueuses vous aspirent et il est impossible d'en sortir ».

Mais outre les risques de noyade qu'il présente, le lac, insalubre, provoque des troubles de la santé chez beaucoup de riverains. Selon le docteur Hamdan, la prolifération des insectes, et surtout des moustiques, est responsable des allergies cutanées et des dérangements du système digestif chez un nombre de riverains. Mais on note également des problèmes de l'appareil respiratoire chez les habitants du pourtour : «Ma fille, qui est âgée de dix ans, souffre d'allergie respiratoire, se plaint une asthmatique, et mon mari est asthmatique, ce qui

La Bête humaine, un roman français
d'Émile Zola, publié pour la première
fois en 1890.
En prêt
au Centre culturel français.

Comme dans la plupart des romans de Zola, la trame de la *Bête humaine* s'articule autour de la classe ouvrière de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, c'est-à-dire du début de la révolution industrielle. Et c'est avec la profusion de détails qui lui est caractéristique que Zola décrit la vie des ouvriers du chemin de fer. Avec clairvoyance Zola prévoit l'influence de la mécanisation sur l'humanité. Les protagonistes, qui vivent dans l'univers froid des machines, ne peuvent trouver le bonheur, et sont tiraillés entre des sentiments extrêmes. Roubaud, l'un des personnages principaux, qui mène une vie paisible avec sa femme Séverine, décide brutalement de se venger du «président», l'homme qui a élevé sa compagne et qui a abusé d'elle lorsqu'elle était enfant. Mais une fois vengé du «président» il bascule dans l'indifférence et ignore totalement Jacques, l'amant de sa femme. Une

Jean Gabin, dans l'adaptation de Jean Renoir (1938), incarne les rapports ambigus entre hommes et machines.

et rend ces dernières responsables des maux de son époque. La dernière image du roman, qui sonne comme le glas d'une sombre prémonition, ... montre une locomotive qui s'écroule sur un ponton, défonçant les rails, aveugle, muette, C'est travers cette image empreinte de fureur et de violence que Zola évoque l'idée d'une humanité emportée par des forces aveugles vers une issue dramatique. Car c'est sans doute dans le titre de l'ouvrage qu'il faut chercher les motivations de Zola. La Bête humaine, c'est cette machine qui est à la fois «bête» car brutale et sans âme, et «humaine» car sortie des mains de l'homme. ■

Nisrine A. Shaikh

Les bibliothécaires choisissent les livres, les classent, les indexent, les aiment. Un jour pourtant, ils doivent s'en séparer. Un témoin privilégié raconte.

J'aime Frédérique et Frédérique n'aime. Une histoire d'amour banale mais le plus volage des deux n'est pas celui qu'on croit. Cette passionnée n'a aucun scrupule à me préférer bien d'autres de mes collègues, plus néufs que moi. Pourtant elle a gardé de notre intimité un souvenir imperissable. Le j'ai sans doute un peu trop effrayée, à tel point qu'elle hésite aujourd'hui à me relire mais je sais que je lui ai plu. Secrètement, elle a promis de me parcourir à nouveau... Y-a-t-il lien plus beau et plus fort que celui qui peut exister entre une bibliothécaire et un livre ?

Tout a commencé un jour de mars 1996. Je suis arrivé empaqueté au Centre culturel français. A peine, le soleil réchauffait-il ma couverture encore brillante, que des mains brutales me collaient une étiquette sur le côté, «R-HAR» (R pour Roman et les trois premières lettres du nom de ma créatrice Jacqueline Harpman), avant que me ranger sur d'étroits rayons tout contre d'autres pensionnaires peu aimables et jaloux de leur espace vital. J'ai très vite compris que les bibliothèques, considérées comme les temples sacrés de la littérature, sont de véritables jungles. Ma condition n'est prévue, même si elle est présente, dans la chance au m'a pas manqué. La communauté francophone goûte le vertige que je lui procure... Objet de convoitise, on m'a kidnappé seize fois en deux ans et demi.

Mais nous autres, livres de
 bibliothèque, vous ne co-
 naissons pas la quénème de
 la quénème de la quénème.
 Évidemment, nous pourrions être
 desherbés, nous sommes des
 rayons, mis au pilon. Combien
 fois les victimes de cette
 méthode intumescite depuis que
 il a rangé mes pages ici ?
 Cingante, cent. Nul n'a pu me
 le préciser. Personne ne sait ce
 que deviennent les
 desherbés. On connaît en
 revanche les raisons de
 l'hécatombe : scientifiques
 dépassés, stars d'un jour
 démodés, antiquités trop
 démodées, les ouvrages qui
 répondent à ces critères de
 sélection ne peuvent échapper
 au couperet impitoyable de la
 bibliothèque. Frédéric n'a
 pas le choix et décline sans
 pitié de cœur : « C'est quelque
 chose de terrible », m'a-t-elle
 répondu un jour. Mais il faut bien

accomplir le sale boulot pour accueillir les nouveautés et faire plaisir aux visiteurs. Car Frédérique n'est pas du genre égoïste. Elle pense d'abord à l'intérêt de son public qui est très disparate : « Nous essayons de ne pas laisser libre cours à notre affectivité ou nos goûts personnels lorsque nous

passons les commandes». Me commanderait-elle néanmoins en mille exemplaires si on lui laissait toute liberté ? J'aime à le penser... Cette année, la priorité a été donnée aux ouvrages destinés aux étudiants en langue française, «un nouveau public du centre depuis deux ou trois ans».

paraît-il. Chaque commande annuelle demande deux mois de préparation pendant lesquels Frédérique épeluche toute la presse afin d'établir un choix «objectif». La commande est d'autant plus difficile à établir que le budget est limité : entre 22.000 et 24.000 francs pour les livres : «Il a diminué de moitié

en dix ans.

regrette la bibliothèque.
Sélection, commande,
désherbage, tous ces mots me
donnent l'impression désagréa-
ble de n'être qu'une vulgaire
marchandise dont on se
débarrasse à la première occa-
sion. Au moins, je sais que ce
n'est pas le cas entre les mains
de la bibliothèque. Cette ancienne
infirmité, soit de naissance ou
acquise, prendra donc son remède.
Ne répète-t-elle pas à qui veut
l'entendre qu'*"elle aime les li-
vres"* ?

Quinze ans qu'elle s'occupe
de nous sans renchigner aux
côtés de Nadia, l'autre
gardienne de ce garde-manger
débordant de nourritures spiri-
tuelles. Même pendant la
guerre du Golfe, quand la bibli-
othèque a brûlé, elle ne s'est
pas découragée. Son monde,
notre monde, s'écroulait pour-
tant puisque, en 2001, 1000 âmes,
un cinquième seulement, ont
survécu. Les fonds sont
désastreusement reconstruits.

Frédérique papillonne d'un rayon à l'autre, luetties en collier qu'elle est toujours prête à chausser pour examiner une quatrième de couverture. Jamais plus loin. Point de lectures à la bibli pour la bibliothèque. Frédérique réserve cela pour d'autres lieux moins passants. Moi, que vous ouvrirez peut-être, j'en sais quelque chose. ■

Moi qui n'ai pas connu les hommes, roman de Jacqueline Harpman (1995)

Le CCF propose une fête du livre les 17 et 18 octobre prochains. Au programme, une conférence sur les dernières tendances de la littérature française (samedi, 18h30), un atelier de création poétique (dimanche, 17h) et deux expositions. Renseignements au CCF.

Pendant dix jours, 250 maisons d'éditions (dont 70 des pays arabes) sont venues présenter leurs publications à Amman. Une fête du livre à dominante académique et religieuse, qui se déroulait pour la première fois dans les locaux tout neufs de la Mairie à Ras-el-Ain et reflétait une coopération nouvelle entre les organisations culturelles, comme l'Union des écrivains, et les autorités locales.

Les Jordanais sont venus nombreux à l'occasion. Les étudiants, intellectuels, responsables des centres culturels, libraires et ont profité pour enrichir leurs bibliothèques. Les livres d'enfants notamment ont connu un grand succès.

Mais malgré la foule, les ventes n'étaient pas, semble-t-il, au rendez-vous. «Le public est là pour passer le temps et s'amuser», confiaient certains éditeurs. D'autres estiment que c'est là fait au prix trop élevé. «*Pourtant, nous proposons des réductions jusqu'à 40%*», affirme Fathi el-Biss, président de l'Union des éditeurs jordaniens; avant d'ajouter: «*Nous aussi on se plaint, les coûts de production des livres (papier, imprimerie, douanes...) augmentent et les*

salaires des gens sont toujours aussi bas alors forcément, ils trouvent que les livres sont chers malgré les réductions». Selon le président, la solution doit venir de la multiplication des bibliothèques publique dans les différents quartiers de la ville.

Un éditeur égyptien se plaint du manque de médiatisation de l'exposition. Certains visiteurs évoquent la mauvaise distribution des stands et l'absence de coordination entre les différents participants de l'expo.

Les organisateurs restent tout de même satisfaits de la fréquentation du public pendant dix jours marquée par un seul incident : la visite de l'ambassadeur israélien. À l'heure du déjeuner, celui-ci a débarrassé sans prévenir avec ses gardes du corps. Un éditeur a refusé de lui vendre ses livres et les responsables lui ont fait comprendre qu'il n'était pas le bienvenu. Le lendemain, le Prince Hassan est passé dans les stands. Ambiance radicalement différente ! ■

Suleiman Sweiss

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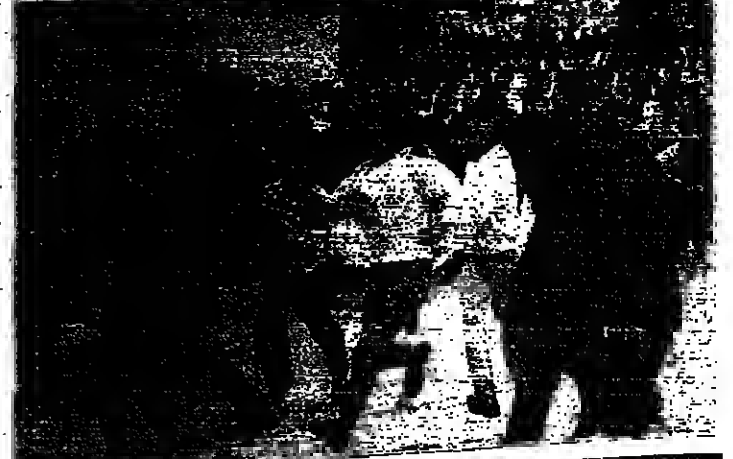
Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Levée du couvre-feu à Hébron

● L'armée israélienne a annoncé la levée du couvre-feu imposé depuis treize jours sur la partie qu'elle occupe dans la ville de Hébron à la suite d'un attentat à la grenade. Le couvre-feu était en vigueur sur les 20 % de la superficie de la ville du sud de la Cisjordanie où vivent quelque 400 colons et 30.000 Palestiniens. Ces derniers ne pouvaient pas sortir de chez eux excepté pendant deux à trois heures, pour aller s'approvisionner. Ce couvre-feu prolongé avait provoqué des manifestations de protestations quasi quotidiennes (voir photo) aux cours desquelles un Palestinien avait été tué par des furs israéliens, et des dizaines d'autres avaient été blessés.

Par ailleurs, l'armée israélienne a allégé le blocage strict imposé depuis dix jours à la Cisjordanie et à la bande de Gaza. Selon un porte-parole militaire, 21.000 ouvriers palestiniens généralement autorisés à séjourner en Israël devaient pouvoir retourner à leur travail dès mardi dernier à l'aube. En outre, 8.000 commerçants palestiniens devaient être autorisés à se rendre en Israël. Le blocage total est en vigueur depuis un mois, à l'occasion des fêtes juives, par crainte d'attentats de militants du Mouvement de la résistance islamique, le Hamas.



Éc-laboussures

Soutien à la Syrie

Depuis début octobre, l'inquiétude ne cesse d'augmenter dans notre pays. L'éclatement d'un conflit armé voire d'une guerre entre la Syrie et la Turquie hante toutes les conversations, toutes les conversations des médias et bien sûr de l'opinion publique. On imagine les pires catastrophes, une situation à l'irakienne et l'on soupçonne Israël d'être l'instigateur de la provocation turque. L'État hébreu n'a-t-il pas conclu une alliance militaire avec la Turquie en février dernier ?

La caricature du 6 octobre dans le *Daustron* est à cet égard éloquent : on y voit face à face un Arabe et un soldat turc sur son char qui se dirige vers la Syrie. Le premier lance : « L'histoire d'Ogellan (le leader du Parti Kurde de Turquie, soutenu par Damas, NDLR) est ancienne, pourquoi vous la découvrez seulement maintenant ? ». Et le soldat de répondre : « Ce n'est pas nous qui l'avons découverte, c'est Israël ! ».

Néanmoins, le ton général est plutôt à l'optimisme : la crise entre les deux pays devrait être réglée par des moyens diplomatiques. Cette solution pacifique est dans l'intérêt des deux peuples et celui des relations traditionnelles araboturques. Le dialogue est défendu par le Prince Hassan et par notre gouvernement qui a appelé les deux parties à « contenir la crise ». La Chambre des députés, quant à elle, a appelé la Turquie à « ne plus menacer la Syrie » (6 octobre).

Les partis politiques, les associations socioprofessionnelles et autres organisations populaires (femmes, étudiants...) sont moins réservés : ils ont entamé une campagne de solidarité avec la Syrie. Une réunion populaire s'est tenue la semaine dernière pour dénoncer « les clauses secrètes de l'alliance stratégique israélo-turque ». Des délégations à l'ambassade syrienne « pour exprimer leur solidarité avec le peuple frère » ont été organisées. Même les Frères musulmans qui ont tant critiqué le régime de Hafez El-Assad dans le passé, se sont également rendus à l'ambassade. Une visite qui a surpris tout le monde mais Zuhairat, le leader des Frères, a déclaré : « Nous devons dépasser nos différences, le devoir national nous impose de soutenir la Syrie ».

Plus surprenant encore, cette campagne de solidarité n'a pas été affaiblie par la déclaration maladroite du ministre syrien de la Défense, Mustapha Tlass qui a tenté de minimiser le rôle joué par l'armée jordanienne pendant la guerre d'octobre 1973. Les autorités jordaniennes ont fermement remis les choses au point. Les gens de la rue, eux, voient surtout un peuple en danger : « Nous ne défendons pas un régime politique. Quand le voisin, le frère, est menacé, on ne peut que le défendre. »

Suleiman Sweiss

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Politique

Quand l'opposition rêve d'unité

La Conférence pour la réforme et le salut national, qui n'a toujours pas eu lieu, rassemble des forces d'opposition avec des projets de société radicalement différents. Elles espèrent néanmoins devenir un interlocuteur incontournable pour un pouvoir engagé jusqu'au cou dans la normalisation avec Israël.

Fourre-tout voué à l'échec pour ses détracteurs, union sacrée légitime pour ses partisans. La Conférence pour la réforme et le salut national n'a pas encore eu lieu et suscite déjà de nombreux commentaires. Il est en effet difficile d'imaginer animal politique plus étrange et plus monstrueux que ce groupement disparate composé de treize partis politiques, de syndicats professionnels et étudiants, et de forces vives de la politique. Qu'y a-t-il de commun entre un communiste laïc et un islamiste ? Entre un ancien chef des moukhabarat et un ex-fédal ?

Une Jordanie arabe, libre et forte

Et pourtant tous ces ennemis d'hier se serrent aujourd'hui la main et se retrouvent à la même table afin d'élaborer un programme « pour une Jordanie arabe, libre et forte ». Celui-ci reste à préciser même si ses grandes lignes sont bien connues : en premier lieu arrêt de la normalisation avec Israël et renforcement des relations avec les autres pays arabes (la Syrie et l'Irak, en particulier), restauration des libertés publiques mises à mal sous le gouvernement de Majali, lutte contre la corruption du pouvoir et remise en cause du programme économique d'ajustement structurel et des privatisations.

La Conférence devait se tenir le 25 juillet dernier, date symbolique puisque 70 ans



Toujan Faisal, une idée de l'opposition bien éloignée de celle des islamistes.

auparavant, se réunissait une autre conférence nationale, celle-là pour dénoncer la main mise britannique sur la Transjordanie et la mise en œuvre du projet sioniste. Le rassemblement a finalement été remis à plus tard à l'initiative des associations professionnelles sans qu'une date précise ait été fixée. Ce report a largement donné du grain à moudre aux sceptiques, pour qui le projet de confé-

rence nationale, plus de six mois après son lancement, a peu de chances d'aboutir.

«Phase d'attente»

Ce n'est pas évidemment pas l'avis des membres de cette conférence, au premier rang desquels on trouve Salem Nabhas, secrétaire général du parti de l'unité populaire démocratique. La plus véhément fut Toujan Faisal, libérale et habituelle colémptrice des « barbus ». La passionaria circassienne a claqué la porte de la Conférence en dénonçant les manœuvres des islamistes et ne croit pas aujourd'hui à la réussite du mouvement : « Les islamistes cherchent à dominer

démocratique, apparenté au Front démocratique de libération de la Palestine. Pour cet homme de gauche, la Conférence doit être une force de propositions, un substitut à un gouvernement incapable de régler les grands problèmes du pays : « La constitution du gouvernement ne reflète pas un pluralisme politique et intellectuel et les membres du Parlement ne représentent pas les partis les plus forts qui sont pourtant porteurs des idées d'une majorité de Jordanais. Le Parlement est incapable d'imposer un vrai programme de réformes ».

La Conférence viendrait donc remplir, en quelque sorte, un vide politique, à condition de concilier les points de vue d'un ensemble qui paraît incohérent et de transcender les dissensions internes. Celles-ci étaient inévitables dans une telle mêlée de genres. Rapidement la méfiance s'est installée à l'égard des islamistes, soupçonnés de vouloir manipuler la Conférence à leur seul profit. « Les partis de gauche refusent la domination des islamistes », souligne Saïd Diyab, secrétaire général du parti de l'unité populaire démocratique. La plus véhément fut Toujan Faisal, libérale et habituelle colémptrice des « barbus ». La passionaria circassienne a claqué la porte de la Conférence en dénonçant les manœuvres des islamistes et ne croit pas aujourd'hui à la réussite du mouvement : « Les islamistes cherchent à dominer

le comité exécutif de la Conférence (un comité composé de 34 membres chargé de prendre les décisions, NDLR) afin d'être les alliés du pouvoir et de faire passer les propositions gouvernementales en leur procurant une légitimité. De la part de l'ancienne députée, qui n'a jamais eu la langue dans sa poche, l'accusation n'étonne pas.

Cependant Toujan Faisal soulève une ambiguïté qui n'est pas artificielle. Pendant 40 ans, le régime a laissé les mains libres à des frères musulmans toujours très proches du pouvoir et qui désormais se retrouvent à la tête de

l'opposition. « En fait, analyse Jean-Christophe Augé, observateur de la vie politique jordanienne, les islamistes sont en porte-à-faux entre la volonté de maintenir des liens avec le régime et leur rapprochement avec les autres composantes de l'opposition ». Lui-même traversé de courants opposés qui s'affirment de plus en plus depuis le boycott des élections législatives de 1997, le mouvement est dans une « phase d'attente ». A cet égard, Toujan Faisal les accuse d'être à l'origine du report de la Conférence. Les islamistes qui en font une partie d'entrée eux-mêmes, ont le jeu d'offrir une porte de sortie et de négociation avec le gouvernement.

Les islamistes en force

Reste néanmoins que les islamistes représentent la plus grosse influence dans la Conférence nationale. Dans le comité exécutif, ils sont bien sûr, présents avec les Frères musulmans et le Front d'action islamique (FAI), sa branche politique, mais également avec

les syndicats étudiant et les associations professionnelles dominés par leurs partisans. « Nous représentons la majorité, il est donc normal que nous ayons un rôle fondamental au sein de la Conférence », justifie Abdul Latif Arabiyat, secrétaire général du FAI.

Par ailleurs, depuis quelques mois, le pouvoir exécutif multiplie les appels au pied aux islamistes et présente un visage plus conciliant que ses deux dernières années à l'opinion publique. Une opération séduction qui pourrait mettre fin à cette expérience originale d'opposition unifiée. Cependant, note Jean-Christophe Augé, rassemble surtout sur des questions de politique régionale, qui peuvent toutefois être liées à des enjeux internes (dossier des réfugiés, critique de la normalisation comme cheval de Troie des investissements israéliens).

Même si des clivages sont latents quant à la paix avec Israël (entre ceux qui ont accepté la Conférence de Madrid, comme Taher Masri, Premier ministre à l'époque, et ceux qui, comme le parti Ba'ath irakien s'opposent à toute reconnaissance de « l'ennemi sioniste »), l'arrêt de la normalisation, engagée depuis le traité signé en 1994, est réclamé par tous les protagonistes. Ce ciment semble avoir d'autant mieux pris que la crise actuelle entre la Turquie et la Syrie souligne les limites de la marge de manœuvre laissée à des dirigeants jordanien pied et poings liés par de mauvaises fréquentations. C'est sur ce front extérieur que la Conférence a le plus de chance de faire valoir sa crédibilité et de s'imposer comme une force incontournable pour le pouvoir. Ce combat-là mérite bien le sacrifice de quelques mains serrées.

Youssef Abu Saleh
et Yassin Lalaie



Les islamistes, qui revendiquent une position centrale dans la Conférence, sont soupçonnés de vouloir se rapprocher du gouvernement.

Le Moyen-Orient dans la presse française Mai 99 : la botte secrète d'Arafat



Les talibans, maîtres de Kaboul, contrôlent aujourd'hui la quasi-totalité du territoire afghan.

« Le coup de poker de Yasser Arafat », c'est sous ce titre que le *Point* du 3 octobre évoque la volonté du président palestinien de déclarer un État à part entière en Mai 99. L'hebdomadaire décrit Yasser Arafat comme un « vieux militant politique habitué aux situations inextricables » qui, poursuit le *Point*, a « sorti sa botte secrète (qui ne l'était d'ailleurs plus guère) pour tenter de débloquent la situation au Proche-Orient ». Dans ce processus, le *Point* définit trois étapes : « première étape : il menaçait d'annoncer à la tribune de l'ONU son intention de proclamer, en mai prochain, la création de l'État palestinien. Deuxième étape : Benjamin Netanyahu, l'intransigent, prenait la mouche. Il s'agit là de la déclaration du premier ministre israélien considérant l'attitude de Arafat comme « une violation des accords d'Oslo ». Un propos qui n'est pas, selon le *Point*, « sans saveur de la part d'un responsable qui a multiplié les initiatives pour, en fait, perpétuer ces mêmes accords ». La troisième étape concerne le président américain Clinton qui, selon l'hebdomadaire, « en profite pour reprendre l'avantage, en réitérant, pour la première fois depuis 2 ans, Netanyahu et Arafat ».

Libération, de son côté, a publié le 11 octobre un article sur le portefeuille des affaires étrangères de Sharon : « Le revêtit, plus fait que jamais ». « Il revient ainsi

fermé face aux américains et à l'opinion publique israélienne ». Dans son édition de la semaine dernière, le *Monde* évoque la situation à Kaboul : « Deux ans jour pour jour après la prise de Kaboul par les talibans, les Kaboullis sont au pas. Les nouveaux maîtres n'ont plus besoin de grandes démonstrations de force pour osseoir leur pouvoir. Le temps n'est plus à l'exhibition publique des récalcitrants ou aux patrouilles armées de bâtons pour forcer les hommes à aller à la mosquée le vendredi. Ainsi, l'atmosphère à Kaboul, selon l'auteur de l'article Françoise Chipaux, « est plus décontractée et beaucoup plus animée. Les marchés sont approvisionnés et, pour qui o de l'argent, on trouve tout à Kaboul ». Quant aux lois des talibans, Françoise Chipaux constate que « si sur le papier elles sont strictes, leur application ne l'est pas toujours. Malgré par exemple, le bannissement du football et des cerfs-volants, on peut voir, le vendredi, les jeunes jouer au ballon dans les squares et beaucoup d'enfants s'amuser avec des petits cerfs-volants ». La musique, elle aussi, « bonnie, et théoriquement absente de Kaboul. Aussi dans leurs voitures, les chauffeurs gardent prête une cassette du Coran pour remplacer en vitesse la cassette de musique qu'ils continuent d'écouter ».

Nahed Al-Khlouf

Exposition Du bronze pour les femmes

Exposée jusqu'au 26 octobre au Centre culturel français, la sculptrice irakienne Lamia Jamal fait de son art une représentation originale et multiple de la féminité.

Après des études de nutritionniste, Lamia Jamal a voyagé dans de nombreux pays. Partout dans le monde, elle s'est vouée à la revendication des droits de la femme, et a milité pour une société débarrassée de toute domination masculine. A toutes les femmes enchaînées du monde, elle dit : « Nous devons partager notre sagesse avec nos enfants et nos petits-enfants pour fonder une société juste et tolérante ».

Le Jourdain : Comment est construite l'exposition ?

Lamia Jamal : L'idée qu'exprime chaque sculpture a été prise en compte pour regrouper les sculptures par thème. D'un côté on peut voir deux danses qui sont pris d'un accès de folie et expriment la colère. De l'autre, on

remarque deux vieilles femmes, qui représentent la sagesse et la grandeur. L'exposition est donc construite autour du regroupement et de l'opposition de thèmes fondamentaux, comme, également, la maternité.

Le Jourdain : Quand avez-vous découvert la sculpture ?

L.J. : Il y a 5 ou 6 ans. A l'origine, je suis artiste peintre. Mais, au lycée, j'avais pris l'habitude de faire des moulages en argile pour représenter ce que j'en enseignais en cours. J'ai toujours préféré le travail manuel. J'ai commencé la sculpture ici en Jordanie à l'Institut des beaux-arts, mais je suis allée régulièrement à l'atelier de l'artiste Khalid Al-Jadir, à l'université, où j'ai co-

centré mon travail sur la peinture. Quand je suis arrivée en Jordanie, il n'y avait pas de sculpture à l'Institut : cela a commencé après mon arrivée. Mais malgré quelques difficultés, mes études en Jordanie furent formidables. La gratuité et la possibilité offerte à tous de suivre les cours sont très encourageantes. Cependant, les études ne sont pas tout, et avoir du talent est essentiel. On peut tout à fait suivre des études sans rapport avec l'art et faire des sculptures magnifiques.

Le Jourdain : Pourquoi n'avez-vous exposé aucune de vos toiles ?

L.J. : Franchement, au début j'avais envie d'exposer mes tableaux, mais on m'a conseillé de me limiter aux sculptures, car elles bénéficient d'une mise en valeur toute particulière, puisque les murs de la salle sont blancs et que le bronze s'y détache vraiment bien.

Le Jourdain : Quels matériaux utilisez-vous pour vos sculptures ? Pourquoi ?

L.J. : La plupart sont en bronze. Elles gardent ainsi toute leur beauté malgré les années. C'est pour moi le plus important. Parfois je me dis que si une sculpture en bronze est perdue, quelqu'un pourra la retrouver, même mille ans après.

Le Jourdain : Travaillez-vous plusieurs sculptures en même temps ?

L.J. : Oui, je travaille souvent deux sculptures en même temps. Mais cela dépend des idées, qui me viennent parfois, alors que je travaille, une idée me traverse l'esprit. Je l'applique alors immédiatement.



Lamia Jamal, artiste engagée.

ment. Mais la réalisation prend souvent beaucoup de temps, parce que le travail passe par plusieurs étapes : il arrive rarement que je fasse un schéma sur papier, car les idées sont toujours en mouvement. Donc, je commence à l'argile et ensuite j'utilise le plâtre. Il ne reste plus qu'à couler le bronze. Mais la finition est toujours délicate. A la fin, je garde un moule de chaque sculpture parce que je me sers souvent des œuvres achevées.

Le Jourdain : Avez-vous un artiste modèle ?

L.J. : Je m'inspire à ma manière et je ne m'inspire de personne. On a parfois assimilé mes sculptures à celles de Henri More car il a décrit la maternité. J'aime ses sculptures mais je ne m'en inspire pas.

Le Jourdain : Que pensez-vous de la situation de l'art en Jordanie ?

L.J. : Je ne suis pas en position d'évaluer la place de l'art ici, mais je peux dire qu'il y a des conditions propices à le développer. En ce qui concerne l'attitude des Jordanien face à l'art, je pense qu'elle n'est pas suffisamment enthousiaste. Souvent, les artistes eux-mêmes n'assistent pas aux expositions !

Propos recueillis
par Anan Sh. Nasereddin

THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies !:

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best on what's hot and
what's not in
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Arab market for PCs continues to grow

THE PERSONAL computer market in the Arab World has continued its steady growth well into 1998, according to market sources. Approximate figures for 1998 indicate a total market of half a million PCs for GCC, Saudi Arabia, Levant and Egypt combined.

Market leaders are expecting PC figures for the current year to far exceed previous levels. Walid Moneimone from Compaq said, "Growth has been healthy in the overall market and a 'consolidation' effect has caused brand leaders to gain market share from locally assembled machines."

A composite analysis by Intel from different sources including IDC, IDG, KT, CRN and their own distributor data shows that the 1997 Middle East Total Available Market (TAM) for 1997 was in excess of 450,000 units. Figures for 1998 are predicted to exceed 600,000 units.

PC penetration in the SoHo market (small office/home office) has traditionally been low, due to the lack of resources and small budgets. However market figures now indicate that SoHo is the largest market segment constituting a market share anywhere between 25 to 90 per cent for most leading companies.

The Middle East market is directly affected by PC prices in the large markets of the United States, Europe and Asia. "As the prices in these markets continue to decline, market leaders in the Middle East are expected to drop prices further," a trend that has contributed to generating more volume sales.

With today's PC becoming more affordable as the entry level, the growth in this market has accelerated dramatically. "Price reductions in PC prices, fueled by Intel's price cuts on its microprocessors can only help increase the adoption of PCs in the Middle East, especially in the price-sensitive home and small business markets," said Nadim Jaroudi, Business Development Manager Middle East, Intel.

According to Compaq, one of the driving factors behind the accelerating growth in the Middle East market has been the advent of the sub-one-thousand-dollar PC. The market response to the new price ranges has further encouraged leading manufacturers to enter this price band with new products.

"The key to growth in this sector is that customers have felt the power of leading brand names at a price they are ready to pay," said Walid Moneimone. "This has taken sales from local assemblers and has also encouraged small and medium businesses to upgrade their hardware or even buy computers for the first time."

Compaq has noted a consistently rapid growth in the number of smaller dealers buying from Compaq distributors by extending the desktop range into this price bracket.

In addition to this, the Internet boom (100 per cent in 1997) has encouraged the adoption of the PC in Middle Eastern homes and small businesses and helped to reduce the barriers of entry into this regional market.

This sector's continued growth is predicted, as these market segments realize the full potential Internet offers in terms of education, entertainment, and electronic commerce and thereby directly influence the growth trend in the SoHo market.

According to experts, the driving force in the Middle Eastern market will be the opening of the Internet to independent Internet service providers (ISPs). This is happening in Egypt and applications are pending in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The consumer sector is becoming increasingly attractive to hardware manufacturers but at the same time the home PC user is becoming more sophisticated. Home PC users are demanding PCs to be specifically manufactured for the home in stylish cases with features such as 'now on' buttons to make the machine sleep and wake up instantly without rebooting.

Companies are commending Microsoft for driving this sector forward in the region with the

The annual computer show, runs from 9 to 13 November this year:

METS '98 opens next month

THE MIDDLE East Technology Show '98, organized by the Jordan Computer Society (JCS), will be held between 9 and 13 November, 1998, at the Amman International Expo Hall, on the Airport Road.

This year the show looks set to be bigger, with over forty companies expected to participate. The major hardware and software dealers will be there, as will the top accessories and computer sup-

plies companies.

This year, with the growth that has taken place in the Inter-

net and on-line sectors, you can expect to see several Internet-

related businesses at the exhibition, including web design and consulting firms.

As usual, METS will include all the latest in hardware, software and services available in the Jordanian market and should also include a schedule of seminars given by local companies on computing and technology topics. For more information about METS, contact the Jordan Computer Society on telephone 5683549.



Intel to introduce 1 Gigahertz chip

INTEL CORP. is aiming for the gigahertz mark, and plans to replace its speediest computer chips with ones running twice as fast by 2001.

On Wednesday, the world's largest computer chip maker unveiled its future product plans, including the successor to its current Pentium II line—including a chip code-named Foster with a target speed of one gigahertz—expected in late 2000 or early 2001. That speed is more than twice as fast as the fastest Pentium II, which runs at 450 megahertz. While Intel already had disclosed some of its plans for chips for powerful workstation and server computers with a new 64-bit chip architecture called IA-64, it had kept mum on its plans for products to succeed its popular Pentium II family, designed around the 32-bit architecture.

The Pentium II family, based

on the so-called P6 architecture, ranges in products from the very low-cost PC market to workstations and servers. The new 64-bit chip architecture, co-designed by Hewlett-Packard Co., was unveiled in October. At the time, Intel announced the first chip based on that design with the code-name Merced. That chip, aimed at the highest performing workstations priced at \$9,000 and above, is expected to be in volume production in mid-2000. Intel said the new microarchitecture to displace the P6, 32-bit design will appear in the Foster chip and another chip code-named Willamette. Intel expects to ship the Foster chip in volume either at the end of 2000 or early 2001, about six months after the Merced launch. "When it comes out, we expect it to run at a gigahertz," said Fred Pollock, a director of Intel's microprocessor products group, refer-

ring to Foster. "We also expect it to run at other frequencies." Foster will be targeted at the workstation and server market for computers in the price range of \$3,000 to \$9,000.

The Willamette chip will be targeted to the higher volume PC desktop and workstation market—systems in the price range of \$2,000 to \$3,000. Willamette will replace the current Pentium II, while Foster will replace the current Pentium II Xeon, which is for the workstation and server market. Foster will match Merced in some functions, and Foster will actually be faster at running 32-bit software applications.

The new 32-bit microarchitecture does not yet have a name. Analysts have been calling Intel's future microarchitecture to follow the Pentium II the P7 architecture, because it succeeds the P6 architecture.

News update

CD-ROM of Jordan's laws & regulations

● A Jordanian firm, Al Said International For Trading & Marketing has launched a 'Jordanian Legal Services' directory on CD-ROM.

The idea is to deliver a full collection of Jordanian laws and regulations, which are frequently needed as a reference by both legal professionals and the regular citizen.

By fast access to information, utilizing a friendly user interface, that functions fully under Windows, this CD-ROM is a pioneering attempt to take Jordanians' law directories into the cyber age.

For more information, con-

tact Al-Said For Trading & Marketing on telephone number 4613228.

Compaq breaks price barriers again

● Compaq has announced its lowest priced PC yet.

Selling for only \$699 in the USA and on the international market, this Pentium is a reasonably configured machine.

Industry watchers believe that it is aimed at the iMac market, by providing buyers with too attractive a PC offer to refuse.

No matter what, this PC is poised to kill off the assemblers. If and when it makes it to the Middle East, it will cost somewhat more, but should still be very competitive.

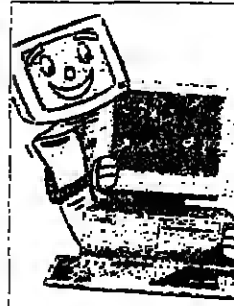
INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Special pricing packages from Microsoft: Battling piracy & serving the community

MICROSOFT HAS launched a commendable initiative, aimed at battling piracy, by which software is to be provided to students and teachers at a lower cost.

Here's an excerpt from the Microsoft press release about the new pricing scheme. "[It] will bring the cost of both Microsoft Office 97 Professional Edition (English or Arabic versions) and Microsoft Development Tools down to \$99 to full-time students and teachers." "The scheme will see savings of over \$500 offered to students and teachers alike on the cost of a copy of Microsoft Office 97, and over \$1500 on the cost of Microsoft developer tools, with both packages being offered at the \$99 price. The license is not a limited-time promotion and is not purchase-linked, and depends purely on the purchaser being confirmed as a bona-fide student or teacher."



"The scheme will see education license 'boxes' being sold by Microsoft resellers in the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan and Cyprus to students and teachers. The boxes contain no software, but have a license application inside, which the student or teacher fills out and then has stamped by the school, college or university at which they work. This application is then sent to Microsoft's fulfillment centre, which validates the application and then sends the applicant a full software package." (end of quotes from press release).

It seems that Microsoft is finally applying the recommendation made for years, by market analysts in the Middle East and other developing markets. The only way to battle piracy among single or home users is to deliver cheaper software.

Only then, will it become reasonable for a user with limited means to invest in an original software package. After all, depending on ethics and morals to halt piracy is hardly a successful strategy. Most users don't feel that they are compromising their ethics by copying home-use software.

Still, taking things one-step further is what is needed here. Why not sell software to everyone for a lower price? Bring down the price of software in general, and battle piracy in all segments—not just in the educational sector.

By delivering cut-down packages, with less documentation and lower costs of packaging, Microsoft and other can provide lower priced software.

Strategic pricing would involve setting the price at a cost as near as possible to pirated copies.

For example, a 12 disk package would cost around JD 40 from a pirate shop in Amman, as would the CD-ROM version of that software. Now, if the cut-down original were priced at around JD 65; surely, a large number of customers will prefer to purchase it as an original.

This policy will not affect the corporate market, because the packages are not aimed at corporations. In fact, Microsoft and others can simply take out some features and facilities from the 'home edition'. Therefore, it would be guaranteed that corporate users cannot use the 'home edition', simply because it doesn't serve their purpose.

One thing is for sure, Microsoft's latest approach will generate more of a sense of responsibility among users. If Microsoft is willing to decrease its profit margin, I suppose everybody should contribute by encouraging this move.

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Ibtisam Awadat and Lubna Khader

Star Staff Writers
"My goal in life is to make beautiful women even more beautiful," said well-known Jordanian Make-up artist Marwan Kheir. He is a professional who employs all his creativity and style to make the brides' wedding day an unforgettable

one. Kheir graduated from England in 1974, where he studied everything about this art form, especially makeup in the television and cinema industries. "I want people to look at make-up as a concept to enrich the beauty of women," said the man who wants to change the traditional views about this dazzling art.

Marwan Kheir Beautician with an enchanting touch

Since the establishment of his beauty saloon in 1992, Marwan Kheir has become the make-up artist for most of the actors and actresses in programs shown on Jordan Television.

Because Kheir is a well-known artist, he keeps a keen eye on the current international trends in fashion makeup. For instance, he says, "Beauticians this summer have concentrated on the mixtures and shades of brown, with a combination of bronze and silver, that gives a stunning effect."



Kheir

The saloon is splashed with pictures of women who have been subjected to the Kheir touch. They include actresses, famous actresses and supermodels. Kheir has an album of women before and after makeup—the change is striking!

For a woman to be perfect on that special wedding night, she needs her hair to be coiffed with great care, and there is no shortage of hair-dressers in the Kheir saloon. Two Muneer Al Dahabi and Mustafa Al Sbeikh, work side by side with the master artist.



Kheir and his associates believe dealing with women can be troublesome, but not impossible. "Women come to us with their own notions about make-up and hairstyle, but they always walk out of the saloon happy and satisfied customers," said Al Shiekh.

Next December will witness the opening of the Kheir Beauty Academy. It will

offer two courses. The first is intended for amateurs, and will be over a two-month period, and is mainly intended for women who want to know more about applying personal makeup. The second is for professionals, and will last for two years. "The Academy," Kheir says, "will be the apex of my career as a beautician."

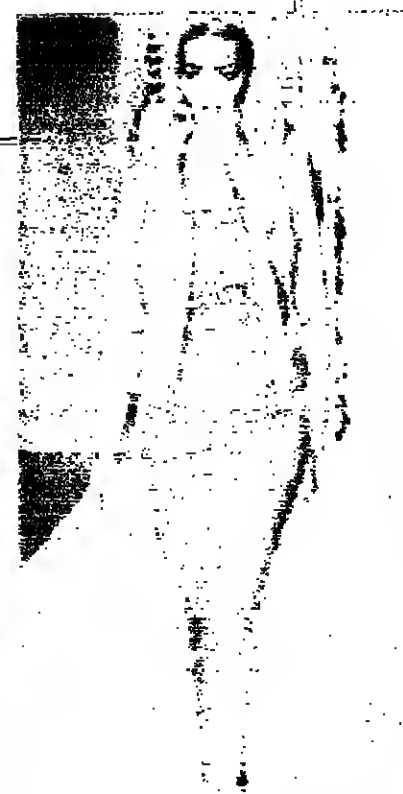
Style



British top model Naomi Campbell presents this military style shirt with beige shorts as part of French fashion house Louis Vuitton's 1999 Spring/Summer collection, designed by American Marc Jacobs.



A model presents this military camouflage pattern dress as part of French fashion house Louis Vuitton's 1999 Spring/Summer collection. Designer Marc Jacobs.



Right: A model presents this silver lame evening dress with matching leather jacket as part of French designer Jerome D'Amico's 1999 Spring/Summer collection.

Dracula, the vampire Fiction and reality

By Rasheed AL Roussan
Special to The Star

THE SUN starts to disappear beneath the hellish skies, the earth becomes garish with darkness, the night spreads its wings, and moonlight becomes your only guide. You are withdrawn to a world of sublime magic and magnitude. You hear the faint howling of wolves everywhere, and children of the night singing satanic hymns of fear and evil.

Suddenly, a castle covered with decayed trees appears, and there beside the door, a figure of a tall, thin man waits for you. Dressed in black, he approaches you with swift strides. His face is pale and blue. His red eyes indicate that he has never slept for ages.

However, as he approaches your neck, slowly, he turns into a beast. His teeth rest in your veins, sucking every drop of blood. After a moment, his manly figure transforms into a bat, flying high above your head, never to return again.

You have had the honor of meeting one of the most famous gothic figures in the world of fiction, the prince of darkness, Count Dracula.

In 1897, an Irish writer named Bram Stoker was inspired to give birth to a monster with a human dimension: Dracula—a seductive young Count with supernatural powers, dwelling in a castle alone. A hunter, who sets his sights on a daily meal of human blood. Although he is a devil, he is also a lover who suffers the agonies of a forgotten past; his beloved Mina. In the novel, the Count seeks his mistress who lives far beyond, killing every human he encounters, until he reaches his destination, never knowing that his burdened soul will soon be devoured forever.

Stoker's immortal novel has paved the way for other artists to portray Dracula in all most every field: Films, books, music, art and TV series.

The German F.W. Murnau directed a movie titled 'Nosferatu the Vampire', in 1922. Hollywood was quick to see the potential, with Coppola's 'Dracula' (1992), and Anne Rice's novel 'Interview with a Vampire' (1994), the pick of the bunch.

However, Dracula's secret identity has been revealed to many. In fact, there has been a man by the name of Vlad, who lived in Transylvania. Surprisingly enough, he has proved to be the real Count Dracula!

Back in the 15th century, Vlad was a Romanian noble figure, who descended from a well-known family of princes. He ruled in Wallachia



A portrait of Vlad

between 1456-1462. After having been defeated by the Turks, Vlad took refuge in Hungary.

In ancient times, every rich family



Dracula's Castle

Vlad's real power appeared when he fought the Ottomans, who held Transylvania under the empire's protection. Along with his military background, the supernatural aura of his character made him more feared by everyone.

It was thought that he held massacres in his castle, where he used to kill villains, beggars and thieves. After that, he would ravenously drink their blood. The rumors soon began to spread that Vlad was actually a vampire; a night hunter who travels beyond time and space seeking his mortal prey.

Since then, many people have tried to prove the actual existence of such species like vampires. In folklore, a vampire is a dead corpse that rises in a form of a bat, sucking the blood of sleeping humans after the sun has gone down.

The first to believe in vampires, were the Slavic people of Eastern Europe. They argued that the only way to destroy these immortal demons was by cremation or stakes driven through their hearts. However, folklore does not prove their existence. Our 20th century interpretations have given Vlad another dimension—a human one.

There are two interesting explanations for the mysterious nature of Count Dracula, and both are medical. The first theory suggests that Vlad was suffering from a rare inherited disease

called Porphyria. The Porphyrias are a group of disorders that affect the body's ability to produce hemoglobin, which can lead to unexplained behaviors like blackouts and motionless positions.

As a result, it was thought that the Count had to compensate for his blood loss by sucking people's veins!

The second interpretation is more down to earth. It was brought to light recently, that rabies is behind all the superstitious rumors surrounding Mr Vlad. The symptoms of rabies on humans are very similar to Vlad's afflictions.

An infected patient becomes hypersensitive to light and noise, which explains Dracula's fear of sunlight. In addition, rabies' patients can't stand their image in front of a mirror, and they can sometimes develop very ferocious and sadistic habits—the same symptoms of a vampire.

If we combine Vlad's sadistic psychology with his infected body, we end up having a real vampire.

Even if we reach a point where science can resolve every supernatural phenomenon, people are still mesmerized by figures like Dracula. They will always remain curious about his birth and his death. Bram Stoker has managed to create a legend out of Vlad: a man of passion and vigor.

After five hundred years of Vlad's death, his soul is still conjured up everywhere, in every nightmare, in every shiver, and in every heartbeat. Out there in Transylvania, tourists arrive every year to see his castle. It is a place beyond your wildest dreams, a place where a legend has once lived and became the emblem of fear and horror.



Interview with a Vampire

had its own emblem, which was preserved by every member of the family. Vlad's emblem was one of a kind, Dracul, the Dragon.

This devilish symbol created a lot of rumors around the Count, and gave him a certain ferocious charisma.

